

Everything has changed

Anthony Bevin
Political Editor

Tony Blair yesterday made a triumphal journey from Islington to Buckingham Palace, and on to Number 10, before declaring his commitment to a new politics without dogma and doctrine.

After an emotionally charged welcome from an enthusiastic crowd in Downing Street, the new Prime Minister said: "For 18 years - 18 long years - my party has been in opposition. It could only say, it could not do."

"Today, we are charged with the deep responsibility of government. Today, enough of talking - it is time now to do."

Hitting the ground running, Mr Blair made his first seven Cabinet appointments before going home to Islington for a good night's sleep, with plans to complete the Cabinet list today.

The Conservatives suffered a second shattering blow in 24 hours when John Major capped the humiliating defeat by announcing precipitate resignation, throwing his party into the turmoil of a leadership contest next month. After saying: "When the curtain falls, it is time to get off the stage," he went off to watch cricket at the Oval.

In spite of hints to the contrary, Mr Blair's new politics was not expected to extend to the appointment of any outsiders, in spite of Liberal Democrat hopes that a new consensus was about to be born.

The new Labour consensus was shown by the lack of attack on the Tory record and the appointment of Clare Short, an outspoken left-winger, to the Cabinet today.

Yesterday, John Prescott was first into No 10, to be appointed Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for environment, transport and the regions. As expected, Gordon Brown became Chancellor of the Exchequer, Robin Cook, Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, Home Secretary, Lord Irvine, Lord Chancellor, and David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment.

Margaret Beckett, the only one of the first seven to have previous ministerial experience, was appointed President of the Board of Trade, but she is expected to be joined by at least two other women today. Ms Short and Marjorie Mowlam.

With 116 women MPs in the new Parliament, the face of politics will be changed for good when the Commons assembles on Tuesday.

But it was the result itself that shook the political scene to its foundations on Thursday night, with seven Cabinet Ministers scythed, the Liberal Democrats more than doubling the number of seats to notch up a 70-year record, and Labour's



Triumphal progress: Tony and Cherie Blair greet the crowds in Whitehall as they arrive to take up residence at 10 Downing Street yesterday

Photograph: Tom Pilon

landslide giving it an expected majority of 179.

That majority trumped the historic Labour landslide majority of 146 won by Clement Attlee in 1945. But with the youngest Prime Minister, record swings, the complete Tory wipe-out in Scotland and Wales, and two Sinn Féin candidates elected in Northern Ireland, it was an election of broken records.

Paddy Ashdown, who claimed advances "in every part of Britain", welcomed the prospect of a new con-

sensus, saying: "Where there are things that the Labour Party will introduce that we think are beneficial, that we agree with and are good for the nation, we will work with them."

His party added another seat late yesterday when Mark Oaten won Winchester from the former health minister Gerry Malone by just two votes. Due to the delayed count the result is not included in the results round-up inside today's paper.

Mr Blair told an early morning Labour celebration at the London

South Bank's Royal Festival Hall: "A new dawn has broken, has it not?" He had expected a majority of between 30 and 40 seats.

But for the Tories, it marked the start of a nightmare that could yet see the party entering the kind of political wilderness inhabited by Labour in the early 1980s.

With Mr Major spurning the pleas of colleagues who had wanted him to steer the party into calmer waters, he opened up a leadership race that was promptly joined by Kenneth

Clarke, the pro-European former Chancellor. Mr Clarke is so loathed by the Euro-sceptics that his candidature will bring out all the poison of Tory division, for which the party was punished on Thursday.

Among those axed by the voters was Michael Portillo, the darling of the right, along with half a dozen other Cabinet colleagues; Malcolm Rifkind, Tony Newton, Ian Lang, Michael Forsyth, William Waldegrave, and Roger Freeman.

Mr Major's sudden announce-

ment of his resignation was the more surprising because the party also lost Sir Marcus Fox, chairman of the backbench 1922 Committee and the one person who is constitutionally charged with responsibility for organisation leadership contests. That process will be paralysed until a successor has been chosen.

There was no shortage of potential candidates. Michael Howard, John Redwood, Gillian Shephard, Stephen Dorrell, and William Hague were all in the frame. But Michael

Heseltine, the one man who could provide the leadership now required, was keeping his own counsel.

Adding to Tory anxiety last night, a source close to the former prime minister even suggested that Mr Major, now freed from direct responsibilities, could come out in outright opposition to single currency entry during the five-year lifetime of the new Parliament. Given that he had spent the entire election refusing to do that, in order to keep his party together, that could be the last straw.

Polly Toynbee and Yvette Cooper, commentator and new MP, relive the emotion of a night to remember

'Pinch me - I can't believe they've gone'

Everyone suddenly burst out hooting. It kept happening all day, now just outside Downing Street and in Trafalgar Square, but even on the other side of London in the Mile End Road. Hooting the old government out and the new one in.

"Pinch me, pinch me. I can't believe they've gone!" said a man among the crowds pressed up against the police barricades outside Downing Street. Early morning, up all night, they came from everywhere.

"If I live to be 100 there'll never be another day like this!" said Mary Thoroughgood, 77, who brought a red rose for Blair and a letter to thrust into his hand if she got the chance.

She was there very early to get her place at the front waiting to see Blair as he went and whoop for joy as Blair swept in. "I remember 1945 as if it was yesterday. But this is better!" she exclaimed.

Peter Bradshaw had rushed all the way down the motorway from Liverpool. "I was so excited I had to be here. Jumped in the car last night and drove like hell."

Nothing succeeds like success. Everywhere I went people were grinning - and everyone was admiring they had ever voted anything else. Did I have the only cab driver in history who was Labour? They might be a notoriously right wing breed - but not mine, not today. Everyone was beaming Labour.

Some, though, were repentant. 18 year old Natalie Richardson, minding the souvenir stand on the corner of Whitehall confessed: "I didn't vote. Didn't see the point."

But she stayed up to watch the results and how did she feel? "It's a blinder. Bloody marvelous. I really think he'll get jobs for school leavers. Yeah, I should have voted."

One who did was John Hyndman, Whitehall street cleaner, a man in his 30s with a hair lip, cleft palate and a lousy job. "I never voted before. But Labour will help people like me."

"I love him, oh I love him. I want to give him a big kiss. Oh I do!" shouted Jonathan Rickards from Shrewsbury.

Next to him was a 66-year-old who'd almost died while waiting six months for heart surgery while the person in the next bed waited only 10 days, patient of a privileged GP fund-holder. "I had to be here to see Major go with my own eyes," he said.

Pressing up against the monstrous great gates Mrs Thatcher erected during her reign, one person remembered that Labour had promised to tear them down - a good, opening gesture for the Blair years.

It had been a long wait since dawn in the bright sun, everyone buzzing with the thrill of history. They spoke of 1945, of 1906. Someone said it felt like the Berlin wall coming down, another that it was like Nelson Mandela's release. High on eu-

phoria, no hyperbole was enough. But many said they never expected this day. "After last time, I never believed the polls. I thought we'd lose again."

"I'll admit it, at first I was iffy about Blair," said a building worker in a singlet. "I couldn't get enthusiastic. I was one that said they're all the same. Nearly didn't vote. But of course they're not the bloody same."

What were they hoping for? Great things. Social justice, Blair's decent society, fairness, hope, an end to meanness. Were they hoping for too much? No, no, they all said, with one voice.

"I know it'll take a long time. It'll be hard. He can't do everything," said Jim Moor, a care worker from East London. "It may take years, but he'll look after the poor and the working class. I trust him."

Among the media and the analysts, those who sifted through every speech of Blair's campaign, there had built up a tide of cynicism. But not among these people. They were bowled over by his overnight speeches on television: men and women said they'd wept. They believe in his humility, his emotion, his radical passion.

But could anyone be as good as they need him to be? Can New Labour break the age-old cycle of political illusion and disillusion, as certain as boom and bust in the economy? Today there were only true believers. Tomorrow is another day.

Share of vote

Labour	44.5%
Conservative	31.0%
LibDem	17.0%
Others	8.7%

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The Independent
Sport is at the back of the Long Weekend today. Television and radio listings are at the back of this section.

What it feels like to be part of history

"The Prime Minister, Tony Blair..." Say the words again. "The Prime Minister, Tony Blair..." And again and again. See how they roll off the tongue.

Astonishing isn't it? And did you see him walk into No 10? Did you see the door close behind him?

As I sit and try to write, on the morning after the election, I keep jumping out of my seat and hopping round the room. I keep grinning.

I can't tear myself from the television. I am jittery with adrenalin and emotion. "What does it feel like to be part of history?" one of the local councillors asked me, as we waited in Knottsgate Sports Centre for the Pontefract and Castleford result. Utterly.

By the time our count finished at 1.30am, we had already seen marginals tumble. Breathless and numb, we watched Peter Snow's swingometer zoom off the scale.

With every scalp, we yelped. Our own majority rose from 23,000 to 25,000, a mere pebble in the national landslide.

As if in a dream, I thanked the returning officers and the police.

Wide-eyed and grinning, I was hugged, kissed, photographed and hugged again by party supporters.

By 3am, unable to sleep, we were on the road to London, racing Tony Blair's plane from

Sedgefield to get there for his celebration speech. When in glorious climax we all screamed as the radio announced Michael Portillo's defeat, the car almost swerved off the road.

Tearing through the empty, darkened London streets, we arrived at the Royal Festival Hall at sunrise to hear the crowds roar as Tony Blair began to speak.

Outside people were ecstatic. Inside, party staff were too shell-shocked, elated and exhausted to smile.

"Now let's do it, let's deliver," I heard one MP whisper to himself like a prayer.

So far has the party travelled. Only five years ago I stood on the steps of Walworth Road with a mere 50 Labour Party workers, bravely cheering and waving some limp roses as Neil Kinnock arrived to concede defeat, believing that we had just lost Labour's last chance to win.

Imagine if we could reach back in time to those gloom-stricken Labour supporters and tell them that in the next election, seats like Finchley and Enfield Southgate would choose Labour MPs.

I mean, Finchley, for goodness sakes? Finchley! And seven Cabinet ministers gone, can you believe it? What an endorsement.

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This is not a mandate for dogma or doctrine ... but a mandate for getting things done - Tony Blair

blair's britain

At 43, Tony Blair is the youngest Prime Minister since Lord Liverpool (who was 42) in 1812

significant shorts

Michael Jackson makes the grade at Channel 4

Channel 4 has appointed Michael Jackson, head of television at the BBC, as its chief executive to replace Michael Grade, it was announced last night.

Mr Jackson was offered the job on 22 April, but has been negotiating to bring some of his own people with him to the channel. Channel 4 insiders were depressed at the news of his appointment. Mr Jackson defeated Channel 4's popular director of programmes, John Willis, who is on leave. Sources in the channel believe Mr Willis will be the first of many departures.

Paul McCann

Bank Holiday drivers hit road

With the arrival of the warmest day of the year, and amid one of the worst droughts for 200 years, the AA expects 5 million drivers to drag their partners and children on a short break this weekend.

Warning of the dangers of rushing to beat the traffic jams, the motoring organisation said that the day before a bank holiday weekend is always one of the worst in the year for crashes, breakdowns and accidents. Meteorologists said holidaymakers could be disappointed in any case, with the weather set to be "pretty dreadful" from late Sunday. And those seeking escape by road to the Continent may have problems getting home on Monday, designated a "day of action" by French lorry drivers.

Simon Reeve

Listeners abandon Radio 1



Radio 1's audience has tumbled to its lowest ever level following the abrupt departure of Chris Evans from its high-profile breakfast show in January.

The station lost 370,000 listeners in the first three months of the year, according to the latest RAJAR audience research figures. In all, 10.3 million people were tuning into the station every week during the first quarter of the year. Meanwhile, Radio 5 Live - just three years old - was celebrating an extra 500,000 listeners, which took audience figures up to 5.5 million, its highest ever.

Paul McCann

McGrath suspect in court

A man appeared in court yesterday charged with the murder of Rachel McGrath, the 27-year-old judge's daughter who was stabbed to death last week.

Nicholas Burton, 27, appeared before Stockport magistrates accused of Ms McGrath's murder outside the Victoria Tavern, Bramhall, Cheshire. Mr Burton, of no fixed address, appeared on remand after he was charged on Wednesday with kidnapping, falsely imprisoning and threatening to kill 17-year-old Debra van Gerko on 26 April, the day after the murder. Mr Burton was remanded in custody until 9 May; he made no application for bail.

'Mad Dog' comes home

Archie "Mad Dog" McCafferty, the mass killer, yesterday returned to the city of his birth, after being deported from Australia. Accompanied by police, he entered Glasgow via the city's airport lobby at 11am, to be mobbed by the media.

Mr McCafferty, 49, was deported against his will on Wednesday night from Australia, where he served 23 years for the murder of three people, as well as a sentence for the manslaughter of a fellow inmate in an Australian jail. In the United Kingdom Mr McCafferty is a free man.

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Hague is Tory front-runner

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Euro-sceptics will use battle to inflict revenge on Kenneth Clarke

William Hague was emerging last night as a front runner in the Conservative Party leadership election after John Major started a bitter battle among his shell-shocked colleagues by announcing he was standing down.

The race immediately threatened to become a damaging contest between the old left of the party and the new right, with leading Euro-sceptics using the battle to inflict revenge on Kenneth Clarke, the ex-Chancellor, who was the first to announce he would stand.

"To have that fat, reckless, ill-disciplined lump as the leader for the future is laughable. Forget it," said one leading Euro-sceptic, as an example of the bile

being spilled as the depth of the Tory defeat sank in.

The Independent learned last night that Mr Major could now come out against a single European currency. "He will be free to speak his mind, and it's always been pretty obvious that he was against a single currency," said a close source.

"In the midst of this blood-bath, we will have to focus on the good things we did right, and the bad, and see what we can gain from it," said one of his supporters.

Mr Major stunned colleagues by announcing his decision to step down from the leadership before he had gone to the Palace to tender his resignation

as Prime Minister. "When the curtain falls, it is time to get off the stage," he said, adding it would be a brief interregnum before a new leader was chosen.

Senior colleagues had urged him to stay on to allow the party to lick its wounds, and rebuild morale with an assault on the Labour emergency Budget in July.

Within minutes of Mr Major announcing he was standing down, Mr Clarke threw his hat in the ring. "I certainly intend to be a candidate in the leadership election," he said.

Mr Clarke said Mr Major had "conducted himself with very great dignity and has come out of the campaign with great per-

sonal credit". But the refusal to stay on for a longer period after the worst defeat since 1832 may lead to recriminations if the party is rushed into a decision before the end of the summer.

Mr Major left behind a shattered party, still coming to terms with the extent of the 177 losses, including Michael Portillo, who would have been one of the leading contenders for the leadership. The contest cannot be held until fresh elections for the officers of the 1922 Committee, who were decimated in the rout.

Alan Duncan, a leading light behind the election campaign at Conservative Central Office, was preparing to act as Mr Hague's campaign manager for

the leadership after the 36-year-old former Secretary of State at Richmond, Yorkshire.

Mr Hague will be promoted as a unity candidate, who could rebuild the right and left of the party. But the other runners were gearing up for the fight, including Michael Heseltine, Mr Clarke and Stephen Dorrell from the left, and limbering up on the right were John Redwood, expected to declare over the weekend, Michael Howard, and possibly Peter Lilley, the former Secretary of State for Social Security.

Mr Clarke insisted that the European issue should not be allowed to continue to cause the

damaging splits in the party, which helped to bring its crushing defeat. He said it could be defused by offering a free vote on a single European currency.

But that was rejected by the Tory right, which has scores to settle over Europe. "I have a great regard for Kenneth Clarke but in respect of Europe he is wrong and out of tune with the overwhelming majority of the Parliamentary party," said John Townend, chairman of the right-wing 92 Group of Tory MPs.

Odds on Mr Heseltine were 7/4; Mr Hague was second favourite at 2/1, and Coral bookmakers made him 3/4 with Mr Howard third favourite at 9/2, ahead of Mr Redwood and Mr Dorrell, both on 4/1. Mr Clarke follows at 8/1 and John Shephard at 14/1.



First day at the office: Gordon Brown greeting supporters after arriving at the Treasury yesterday

Photograph: Mykel Nicolaou

Sinn Fein wins two seats

David McKitterick
Ireland correspondent

Sinn Fein and David Trimble's Ulster Unionists emerged victors in Northern Ireland's 18 constituencies, with Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness both winning seats and the Ulster Unionists adding one to their tally.

It was a bad day for John Hume's Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and the Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), each of which dropped a seat.

Most of the political speculation arising from the results centred on the possibility of a renewed peace process, and on whether the two Sinn Fein gains made a new cessation of IRA violence more likely. Both Mr Adams and Mr McGuinness claimed their victories represented votes for peace.

Within the nationalist community, Sinn Fein clearly fared better in its contest with the SDLP, as the republicans went from no seats to two and the SDLP slipped from four to three.

The republican surge appeared to be greeted with no great alarm in either London or Dublin, however, since Sinn Fein has for some time seemed favourites to take West Belfast and Mid-Ulster and since in both cases specific local factors played a large part in the results.

Sinn Fein MPs are prohibited by their party constitution from taking Commons seats, but the republicans have already made it clear that they have plans to open an office in London and intend to use their parliamentary status to the fullest possible extent without actually taking their seats.

The success of Mr Adams in West Belfast meant the Sinn Fein president recaptured a seat he had held between 1983 and 1992. The SDLP gained more Protestant votes than previously, but Mr Adams's vote rose sharply, partly as a result of boundary changes.

In Ulster Mid, Martin McGuinness won as a result of a concerted nationalist effort to dislodge the Rev William McCrea of the DUP. Mr McCrea suffered from boundary changes while the Sinn Fein candidate benefited from tactical voting by perhaps 6,000 SDLP supporters. By almost universal consent, however, the switch came about because voters opted for the nationalist candidate most likely to topple Mr McCrea.

The Ulster Unionists benefited from a split nationalist vote in the only new seat, West Tyrone, where in a particularly hard-fought contest the SDLP and Sinn Fein tied with 14,000 each, allowing William Thompson to take the seat with 16,000. This success looks likely to strengthen David Trimble's hand in his battle with Unionism with the Rev Ian Paisley. The Ulster Unionist leader said that during the election his party had faced a levelled personal vituperation that he had not experienced in debates.

Martin McGuinness said after his election that he was "totally in favour of dialogue, talks, negotiations and a search for a peace settlement in this country". He said the election sent a message to the British and Irish governments that a determined effort was needed to rebuild a peace process, adding: "We in Sinn Fein will do all in our power to assist in the reconstruction of a new peace process."

Blair's magnificent seven: the new cabinet takes shape

These are the seven Labour front benchers appointed yesterday as Tony Blair named a third of his Cabinet within hours of stepping through the front door of 10 Downing Street. Mr Blair will complete his appointments today, providing strong clues to the priorities and direction of the incoming government.

Clare Short is widely expected to be appointed to a Cabinet post. Mr Blair's press secretary, Alastair Campbell, becomes a special adviser with responsibility for speaking to the media on the Government's behalf. Jonathan Powell, who was head of Mr Blair's office in Opposition, becomes chief of staff, responsible for coordinating his private office, the press office, the policy unit at Number 10 and the political office.



John Prescott, 58
Becomes Deputy Prime Minister in charge of a new "super ministry" covering transport and environment, including the regions. It is the job he wanted, after turning down other portfolios, to get stuck into a task which could include raising investment in the London Underground and more house building.



David Blunkett, 49
If Labour had wanted to design its ideal Secretary of State for Education, it might well have come up with David Blunkett. His experience of the education system is responsible for his enthusiasm for policies more usually associated with politicians of the right: mental arithmetic, discipline, learning to read using methods plugged by traditionalists. He will give no quarter to failing schools and failing teachers, and is determined to raise schools' expectations of their pupils.



Margaret Beckett, age 54
Appointment as President of the Board of Trade is a reward for her key campaign role. She now appears rehabilitated after a rocky period, appearing at election news conferences and on television. She was praised when she took over the leadership after John Smith's death in 1994, but gained little. After Blair won the leadership election she was demoted from deputy leader to health, then trade and industry. Brought up in Norwich, she has been member for Derby South since 1983.



Gordon Brown, 46
"Sex on legs," was how one woman at my election night party described the new Chancellor. "He's very intelligent and I like that in a man." His keen intellect will please Treasury officials too. Mandarins like their chancellors to be brainy and interested in the nuances of economics. Ken Clarke had the brains but not the interest, Gordon Brown has both. Serious-minded, with a passion for fairness that stems from his upbringing as the son of a Church of Scotland minister.



Robin Cook, 51
The new Foreign Secretary is marked as a man who will make a distinctive contribution to the Blair administration. The image of the rather gnomish Scotsman as a man with a barbed tongue and razor wit - used to superb effect in parliamentary debate - is public enough. But behind that is a sense of mission that has meant keeping faith with basic principles. Known as something of a Euro-sceptic, he will take a lead in European negotiations and in defence and foreign policy.



Derry Irvine, 56
Alexander "Derry" Irvine is one of the least well-known but most influential members of the new Blair Cabinet. He has already pledged a review of legal aid spending and a "cost-benefit" analysis of the plans to overhaul the civil justice system. He appears more liberal than Jack Straw, persuading him to drop his support for the bug-busting provisions in the Police Bill, and he influenced Labour's decision to incorporate the European Convention of Human Rights into British law.



Jack Straw, 50
There should be no surprise that Jack Straw should have progressed from angrier liberal left, making law, and order a Labour selling point, to ascending to Home Secretary. He was widely criticised in 1995 when he urged that the streets be reclaimed from the "aggressive begging of wine addicts and squeegee merchants". But for many, here was a man who understood the plight of estate dwellers who were fed up with having their front doors kicked in.

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When the curtain falls it is time to get off the stage. That is what I propose to do - John Major

blair's britain

Labour's majority of 179 is the highest since the Tories' victory in 1935

The airbrushed image of Cherie Booth masks an extraordinary personality, writes Suzanne Moore

The woman of substance who remains an enigma



Modern paradox: Cherie Booth is having to learn the role of consort and in doing so is unlearning the independence she has fought hard for all her life. A high-flying lawyer, she is regarded by many as cleverer, warmer and more interesting than her husband, yet she has been relegated to the role of a mute, doe-eyed limpet during the election campaign. Insisting she will pursue her career and maintain a life for herself outside Downing Street, Mrs Blair may nevertheless find her role is compromised by her husband's position.

You have to be pretty tough, ambitious and determined to be Prime Minister, but close to Tony Blair there is someone still tougher and more ambitious: his wife, Cherie. Whatever it is Tony has, Cherie has more. Those who have met her tell you over and over again that she is cleverer than him, warmer than him, better at talking to voters than him, more interesting and engaging than him. Yet she is not him and has been relegated in this campaign to a limpet-like role. Mute, doe-eyed, dropping back every time the camera is present, we have heard nothing from this extraordinary woman, the so-called secret weapon of the Labour campaign.

Her silence has been golden. It has neutralised electoral fears of loony lefty lawyers, of superwomen, of strident Hillary Clinton types. Cherie - we still don't really know how to pronounce her name - has uttered only half a sentence in the last few weeks, and that was in the Molly Dineen party election broadcast. We don't know what she really thinks about moving house. Instead, we have been fed air-brush whole-someness, the family values portraits, the snippets in *Prima* about meals to cook in 30 minutes and advice about not cutting your toenails in front of your man. Cherie certainly knows how to keep mystery in her marriage because she is a mystery. What you see is definitely not what you get. The word most often used admiringly about her is sphinx.

The less we hear of that deep, husky voice, the more difficult we have squaring the way she appears with the way she appears to be. Fragile, shy, awkward and continually grabbing at Tony's sleeves - including yesterday's almost embarrassing attempt to kiss Tony on the steps of Number 10 - she looks a model of subservience, making Jemima Khan look scary. Then we have to dispute the facts. She's a top lawyer, a have-it-all superwoman. Catholic, a high achiever with an embarrassing dad, a woman capable of setting her mind to anything. Fiercely intelligent, proudly political, she has insisted that she will carry on with her career. She will have a life outside of her husband's, an autonomy that no former partner

of a prime minister has had before. This, anyway, is her ambition. Whether it can be achieved or not is already being debated. She wants to be a judge, she is already an Assistant Recorder, but it is possible that her role will be compromised by her husband's position. If she were to be involved in judicial reviews, interpreting legislation, she could find herself advocating against Labour policy. The conflict of interests would be obvious. Apart from this, however, it would be difficult for her to accompany her husband on important foreign trips, which friends say she would want to do, once she had committed herself to long-term cases. One senses a woman who is trying to cling on to an old life because she just can't imagine what her new one will be.

Is her head full of ideas about rearranging children's bedrooms? Is she worried that there is no Sainsbury's near Downing Street? Has she thought about where Kathryn will go to school? Does she need yet more new clothes, another make-over? Does she like being a willing accomplice to the spinners and winners of the Labour aristocracy? Will she continue to be squished by Peter Mandelson and given advice by the Campbells? How many more sacrifices must she make? If she were to open her mouth one imagines nothing but a scream. Even amid the jubilation of a Labour victory her task is not enviable.

She is learning how to be a consort and in doing so is having to unlearn the independence that a woman of her generation fought hard for. If she and her husband have needed to make a conventional family life as a defence against the instability of both their backgrounds, she has still had the room to pursue a career. Now, though, because of her husband, she must play the dutiful wife, though the fear that she would be demonised as a Hillary Clinton figure has largely evaporated. Cherie was not involved in the leadership contest and has never sat in on policy meetings as Hillary did. Instead, she proved herself as a good "constituency wife", tremendously popular in Sedgefield and some would say that the remaining of her image was just part of a forgoing something crisis that she would have gone through anyway.

Nonetheless, she has been hurt and humiliated by the intense media scrutiny to which she is subject. Our fascination with her inappropriate body language persists largely because we have nothing else to go on. It is clear that she and her husband don't know how to behave in public. Why should

they? But for a modern, media-savvy couple, they are remarkably innocent of their own image. One insider puts this down to simple lack of taste. "The Blairs have no taste at all. They are just not stylish. In that way they are the real thing, genuinely classless. They are not properly middle-class, ac-

tually they are quite raff. Tony used to have this revolting yellow baseball jacket." Others recall times before her husband's ascent when a beleaguered and exhausted Cherie would be rushing around the "bomb site" of a house stripping beds. All this, of course, is far more endearing to deliver.

than the see-through media manipulation that has been going on of late.

Far from being the threat to other women that the male spin-doctors fear, Cherie instead embodies many of the contradictions that women far less high-flying than herself are familiar with. Cherie may have it all but not a single woman I spoke to wants what Cherie has. "It must be hell," they said again and again. It must be.

The closing down of the Labour Party in order to win this election has meant that Cherie has lived with this intense discipline. What people see when they look at her is the split between her public life and her private self. Sometimes she quite literally looks torn, in pain. At such moments, we realise that maybe she is not what she seems, but somehow we know she is strong enough to suffer in order to persuade us that this is the case.

There is no slipping off into becoming a Denis Thatcher-like caricature. Instead, she must put huge effort into looking relaxed, behaving naturally. The work ethic that has always compelled Cherie has always produced results. She is not used to failure. So she is working overtime at being passive, absconding herself from any controversy, labouring at being when she would rather be doing. I hope it's all worth it. I really do. Five years of meeting and greeting, grinning and bearing it is a lot for anyone to take.

My fantasy about her is personal rather than political.

Something will crack and she will find herself accidentally pregnant a year on from now. Her life plan, so beautifully organised, will appear to crumble. But the child will do an unpopular government a power of good. It will be treated as a royal baby and it will be born to a judge who continues to work throughout her pregnancy.

Cherie, in spite of her desire to perform and conform, will find herself with the autonomy she requires. And Tony? He may be shocked at first, but even he will see that a judge with morning sickness is part of the brave new future that he once promised to deliver.

Fresh start on longest day

Steve Boggan

It was difficult to know when one day ended and the other began, but somewhere in between saw the dawn of a new era.

It was the beginning of a new type of government, Tony Blair style, and he wasted no time in showing the world what it meant. Within minutes of leaving Buckingham Palace as the Queen's tenth Prime Minister, it was there for all to see on the doorstep of 10 Downing Street.

Gone was the imperiousness of the Thatcher years. Gone too the bland grey-neat that had bedevilled John Major. Instead, a young family stood in the glare of the world's gaze, the wife hugging the husband as if she still had a schoolgirl crush on him, the children blinking nervously.

Throughout his six-week campaign, the Labour leader stressed his vision for the future, because it was his children's future. And when he stood outside Number 10 with his wife, Cherie, their arms around Euan,

Steve Boggan on 24 hours in the life of the new Prime Minister

13, Nicholas, 11, and Kathryn, nine, it was easy to see what he meant.

Election day had been more than 24 hours long for Mr Blair. It ended when he arrived home in Islington, north London, at around 6am yesterday after leaving behind ecstatic scenes at Labour's election party in the Royal Festival Hall.

But there was to be little sleep. Mr Blair rose early yesterday and spent the morning making telephone calls. At 13 minutes past noon, he stepped into the sunbath outside his home to be greeted by applause and cheers from neighbours and well-wishers. Cherie joined him for the first time in the green prime ministerial Daimler surrendered earlier by John Major. Accompanied

by Alastair Campbell, his press secretary, Special Branch officers and police outriders, he was driven to his audience with the Queen along a route lined with crowds waving Union Flags.

They were greeted at the King's Door by Lt-Commander Toby Williamson, the Queen's equerry. It was 12.31 and Mr Blair was one minute late for his appointment with the Queen in the Audience Room where, 30 minutes earlier, John Major had tendered his resignation.

Twenty-five minutes later, Mr Blair left as Prime Minister and sped to Downing Street, cheered by party workers and their children. Then, after a tour of the Downing Street living quarters, began the business of government, with a meeting with Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary, and Alex Allan the Principal Private Secretary.

But before announcing the first members of his Cabinet, Mr Blair the family man got together with his children, his father, Leo, and Cherie's family, and had a spot of lunch.

jo brand's week

Look what's happened. A Labour landslide, goodbye to the Tories and the dawn of a new era, which leads me to wonder how comics are going to deal with the next five years and tackle the characters who will make up our new government. Well, many comics will be doing what they have always done, which is to ignore politics altogether. Popular television comedy these days, with the exception of a few like Rory Bremner and Mark Thomas, shies away from any political stance at all. *The Day Today*, Mrs Merton, French and Saunders and Alan Partridge all keep it shut as far as political opinion is concerned, which is probably why they are on big telly channels.

Over the last 12 billion years of a Tory government, we comics have been spoiled with a wealth of flawed characters, particularly male Tory MPs who have had difficulty attempting to keep their wallops or flies shut. David Mellor, Cecil Parkinson, Jerry Hayes and the like have all been very welcome grist to the comedy mill as the press has revealed indiscretion heaped upon indiscretion. This coupled with Back to Basics, which underlined splendidly the problems MPs had living up to the Victorian ethos of little Johnnie Major, have great comedy joy to many on the circuit.

And then, of course, there was the great she-devil herself, Mrs Thatcher, whose comedy potential can never be underestimated. Not only did she have no sense of humour, a complete inability to understand and empathise with the lives and minds of working people, she also had the comedy equivalent of the Adams Family at her side.

Her ever increasing megalomania attended by the proper demon eyes, not ones that had to be invented by advertisers, was a true gift to many comics.

Throughout the miners' strike and the Falklands, she popped up time and time again on the comedy circuit, whilst her son Mark became a by-word for getting lost and Denis replaced Oliver Reed as the comedy tippler.

Her replacement by John Major depressed quite a few comics. Apart from his rather strange upper lip arrangement, he did not offer the wealth of psychopathic personality traits that could be identified in La Thatcher. However, his voice is very easy to imitate and has therefore found a place in many comics' acts, even mine when I've had a few bevies.

One should not forget, as well, the vast range of appalling Tory women who were ripe for a good ripping apart. From Ann Widdecombe to Lady Olga Maitland, there has seemed to be an endless stream of horsey, home counties types with hearts like ice ready to attack single mothers or any other group which has the temerity to ap-

pear to public minus its pearls and twin set. Add to that Theresa Gorman who appears to have some form of BSE following an overdose of HRT, and Edwina Currie, who thinks she is some sort of vamp that men yearn for, and you have an easy gang to attack.

So who have we got now? Some of us have been digging at Tony Blair for years already, targeting his fixed smile, inconvertible shift to the right and shedding of socialism. This, I suspect, will continue, but as the Shadow Cabinet becomes the Cabinet, attention will focus more on those members of the party, who hitherto have managed to retain a fairly low profile. The pickings look slim.

Will there be an Alan Clark type living in a castle and nipping entire families of women? I think not. Can we expect to find some Labour MPs discovered in flagrante under the thigh-length boots of a dominatrix? Doubt it.

The thing about comedy, is that it thrives on the excesses of the human personality and there is not an awful lot to say about someone who is trustworthy, does their job properly, loves their husband/wife and doesn't take bribes. Labour may look like this now, but as we all know, there are few people in politics that haven't got something seriously wrong with them. In the meantime: HURRAH! a million times... we've got rid of the bastards at last.

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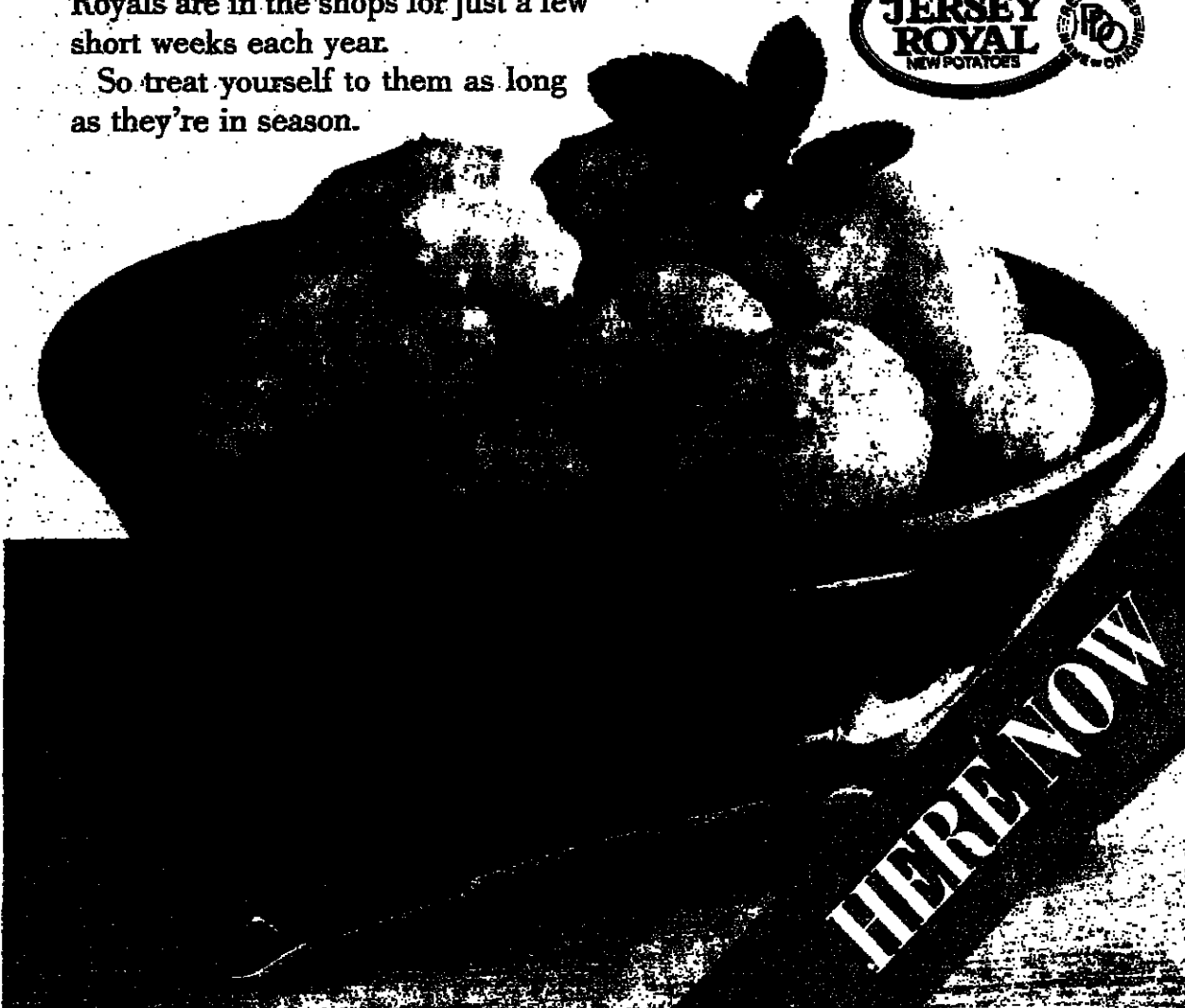
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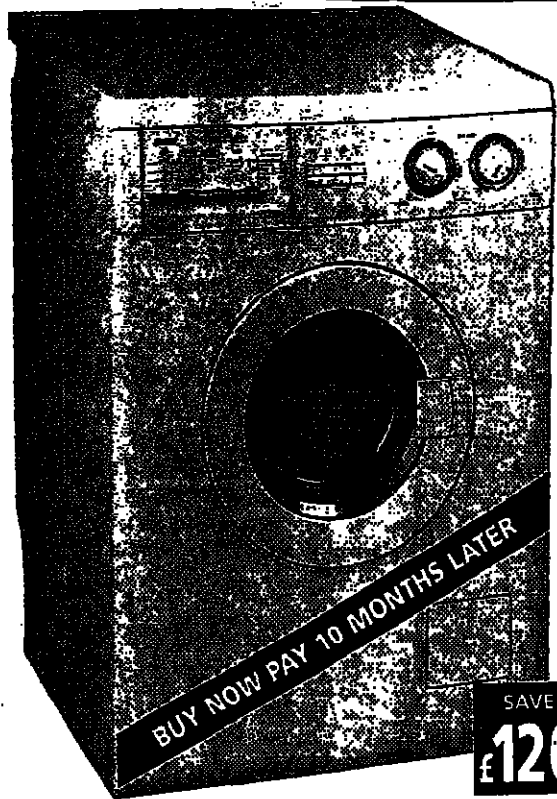
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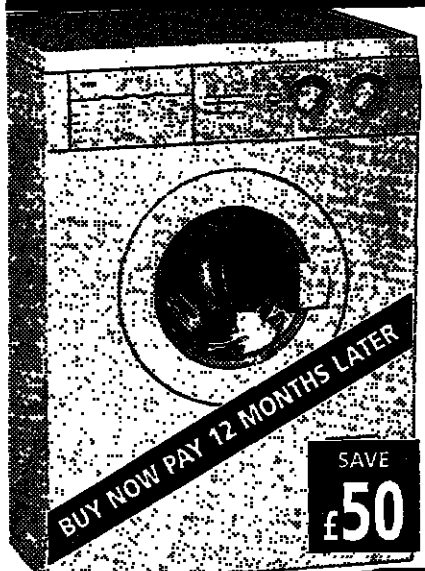
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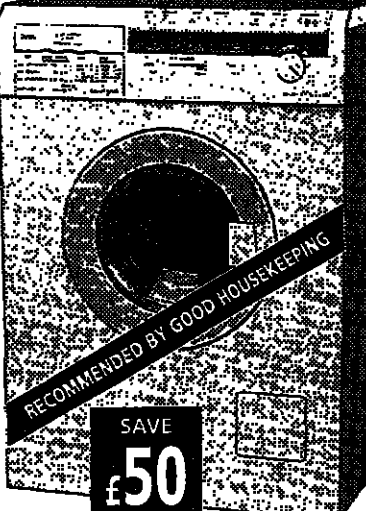


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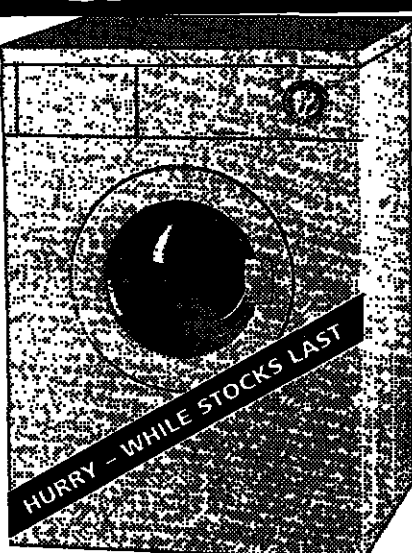
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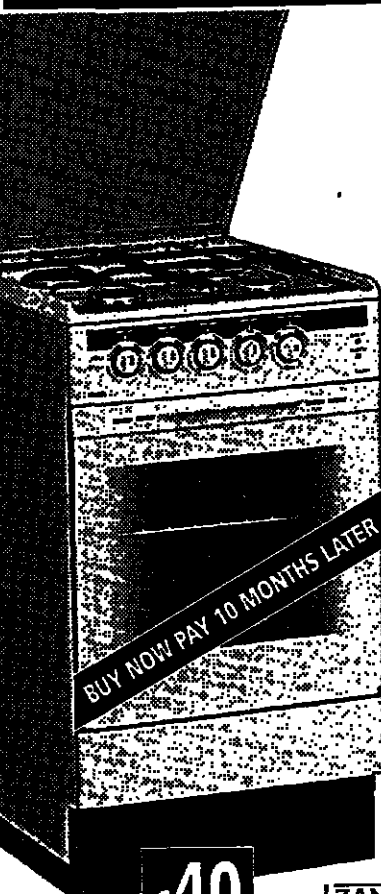
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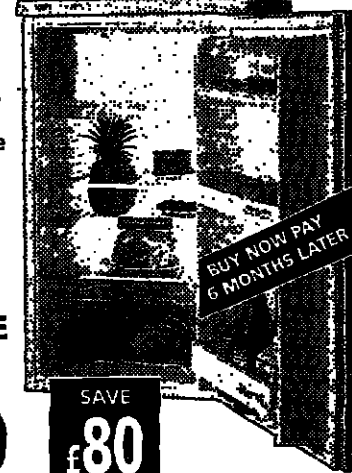
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6 Martin Bell's campaign was flagrantly dishonest, not to mention corrupt - Neil Hamilton

blair's britain

No Tory MPs in Scotland or Wales - for the first time since the party was formed



New beginning: Paddy Ashdown in the deserted Liberal Democrat election headquarters yesterday after the valedictory press conference

Photograph: John Voos

Ashdown heralds era of reform

Barrie Clement

Paddy Ashdown yesterday greeted a "seismic shift" in British politics and looked forward to the possibility of a "great Parliament of reform". Mr Ashdown, at the head of an election campaign which ruthlessly targeted winnable seats and ignored hopeless ones, celebrated the election of 45 Liberal Democrat MPs compared with 20 at the last election. The Liberal Democrat leader pointed out that it was the best result for any third party since 1929.

While the Liberal Democrats' share of the national vote was slightly below the 18 per cent achieved in 1992, the focused nature of the election strategy enabled them to pick up most of the 50 seats they targeted. Party officials argued, however,

that a fairer electoral system would have doubled the Liberal Democrat representation. Mr Ashdown said: "The Conservatives have suffered an election catastrophe of earthquake proportions. No doubt they will now understand the injustice of the first past the post electoral system."

Mr Ashdown's aides emphasised Tony Blair's recently reaffirmed pledge to set up a commission to investigate a proportional representation as a means of electing MPs.

The timetable agreed by both Labour and the Liberal Democrats would mean that a commission on the issue would report in a year's time and there would be a referendum on its recommendations within two years. Depending on the result of the plebiscite, the Liberal Democrats say that a new sys-

tem would be in place by the next general election.

Mr Ashdown pointed out that two-thirds of the new House of Commons was committed to the establishment of the commission and that Liberal

required. They would be a "constructive opposition".

He also said his party would now make a far more effective opposition than the Conservatives who would be preoccupied with internal arguments.

6 No doubt the Tories will now understand the injustice of the first past the post electoral system

Democrat MPs would co-operate with the Government to ensure that the process went ahead as agreed.

The Liberal Democrat leader said his party would assist the new administration where that was possible and provide "vigorous opposition" when it was

Asked by journalists at yesterday's final press conference what he thought of Mr Major's powers of leadership, Mr Ashdown said he had fought "an honourable - almost lonely campaign". And he added: "Anyone who has watched it cannot but admire his personal de-

termination and his personal courage. It has been a remarkable sight. He is a decent man leading what is a terrible party."

Liberal Democrat strategists yesterday claimed the result as a triumph for its policy of targeting marginal constituencies. They had also tried to persuade the electorate that they could be "winners" - emphasising the fact that they were the second largest party in local government.

Chris Rennard, the party's director of campaigns and elections, said that party had also clarified what it stood for. In the 1992, the Liberal Democrats had emphasised their policies on constitutional reform and the doctrine of "equidistance" between Labour and Conservatives. This time they had hammered home their commitment to education and health and were open about the

need for more tax to finance it. Mr Ashdown was prominent on the hustings and his reputation for integrity and his tireless campaigning had proved a vote-winner, Mr Rennard said.

In Taunton, for example, the Liberal Democrats were 3,336 behind the Tories in the 1992 election, securing 41 per cent of the vote, compared with the Tories' 46 per cent. This time, Jackie Ballard, the Liberal Democrat candidate, got 43 per cent of the vote to the Tories' 39 per cent. "We knew we could win if people thought we could win," said Mr Rennard.

In some editions yesterday, we wrongly reported that Simon Hughes, the Liberal Democrat's health spokesman, had lost his Southwark North and Bermondsey seat. In fact, Mr Hughes won by a margin of 3,400 over Labour.

Bell raises the standard for cleaner class of democracy

JoJo Moyes

Martin Bell, the new Independent MP for Tatton in Cheshire, vowed yesterday that he would continue to raise the issue of standards in public life, possibly with the help of the Labour Government.

Speaking at a press conference in Knutsford, Mr Bell, who overturned a majority of 22,000 in the fourth safest Conservative seat in the country to win his own of 11,000, said that one of his priorities would be to secure a place on the Committee of Standards and Privileges.

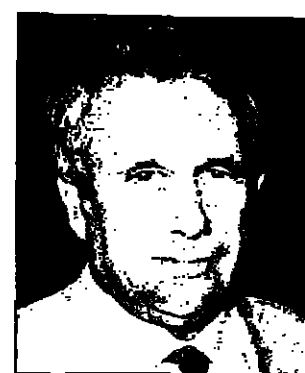
"The issue that got me elected had to do with standards and practices and increasing trust in the public of their elected representatives."

"I want to be as effective as I can on that issue and that will obviously involve co-operating with the Government," said Mr Bell, who made it clear that he had not been approached by the incoming Labour administration to do so.

Mr Bell, his white suit a little crumpled after a night of celebration, added that his medium-term goal was simply to be "as good a member of Parliament for constituents as is possible".

To do this, he said, he would be in regular contact with the Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs who had stood down so that he could contest the seat against Neil Hamilton, the former Conservative minister at the centre of sleaze allegations. "In particular, I want to work with local councillors. I also hope to have a constructive dialogue with the local Conservative Association," Mr Bell said.

He added that his other prime concern would be to help the families of servicemen. The former war correspondent ascribed his astonishing victory to the "solid support" of the Labour and Liberal



Martin Bell: Plans to seek dialogue with Tatton Tories

6 I know we must have got at least 10,000 Conservative voters

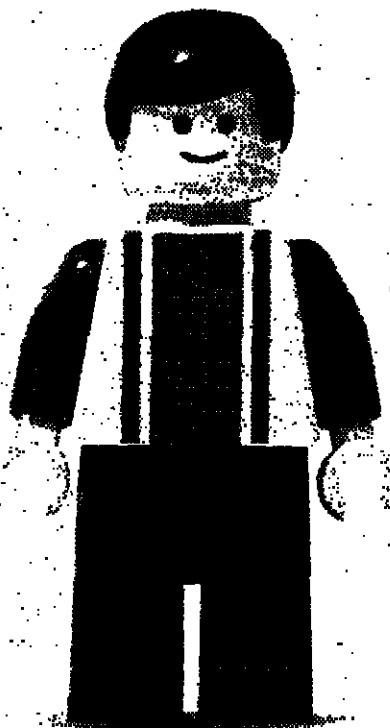
Democrat voters. "But I know we must have got at least 10,000 Conservative voters. We also attracted a large proportion of people of no political persuasion who otherwise would not have voted," he said, adding that the result was "humbling".

Having enjoyed a rapturous welcome during a walkabout of his new constituency yesterday morning, Mr Bell admitted he felt some sympathy for his former rival "as a human being". "But then I also told myself that he had got himself into this position. So much the obvious thing for him to have done was stood down and withdrawn his candidature for someone who would certainly have won for the Conservatives," he said.

Mr Hamilton, following his defeat, made a less-than-gracious speech in which he vowed to be back "as a politician and as a man".

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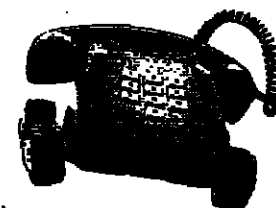


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It has been remarkable ... a decent and honourable man leading a terrible party - Paddy Ashdown

blair's britain

The new Parliament will comprise the largest number of women MPs ever seen in Britain

Scotland and Wales: Tory-free zones



Once a majority, now down to nil

Stephen Goodwin

Michael Forsyth went fishing yesterday morning as the Conservative Party he led before the election tried to come to terms with its annihilation in Scotland.

The Conservatives, who in the 1950s were the majority party in Scotland, not only have no MPs, but no members of the European Parliament. Not one council in Scotland is under Tory control.

David McLetchie, president of the depleted voluntary wing of the party, said the Conservatives in Scotland had to go back to basics and then rebuild. Mr McLetchie did not rule out dropping the party's full-blooded opposition to devolution, which had been such a feature of Mr Forsyth's period as Secretary of State for Scotland.

Mr Forsyth, one of three Cabinet ministers in Scotland to lose his seat, ruled himself out of any immediate political activity, including, it seemed, the possibility of leading opposition to Labour's proposed referendum on a Scottish Parliament.

"I am going to take my own advice and reflect on the result, but I think it is very unlikely for the foreseeable future that I will be involved in politics. Although I shall remain a member of the Conservative Party here in Scotland and will do anything I can to assist in the Unionist cause," Mr Forsyth told reporters he had already been fishing in his new life as "Private Subject Forsyth".

Most Scots Tories still seemed too shocked at their

party's overnight annihilation to think about the future.

The wipeout means that a Tory representing an English constituency will now have to act as shadow Secretary of State for Scotland. There are several Scots-born Tories capable of filling the post, but the bizarre nature of the arrangement is bound to provoke protests when the unfortunate appointee rises to speak in the Commons.

Under current rules there will also be no Tories on the Scottish Grand Committee, since membership is limited to the country's 72 MPs. Alex Salmond, leader of the Scottish Nationalists, said he would strongly resist any Tories from England being "parachuted" on to the committee.

The SNP and Liberal Democrats spent yesterday vying for the role of "official opposition" north of the border. By careful targeting, the Liberal Democrats won 10 seats in Scotland while the SNP, on a larger 22 per cent share of the vote, added only two seats to the four they held before 1 May.

Privately, the SNP was disappointed not to have won any seats from Labour and their tally fell short of the minimum seven seats Mr Salmond had wanted.

Sounding rather like a football manager claiming success on his team's share of possession rather than goals, Mr Salmond told reporters: "We are still the braveheart of Scottish politics. We are also claiming to be the official opposition in Scotland."



Last stand: Ian Lang contemplating defeat at the Galloway and Upper Nithsdale count Photograph: Angus McDougal



Labour takes 34 of 40 Welsh seats

Tony Heath

Amid loud cheers at 12.30pm yesterday, Wales became a Tory-free zone. The party's final humiliation in the Celtic parts came when the Liberal Democrat Richard Lacey spectacularly overturned a 130 Tory majority to win Brecon and Radnorshire by more than 5,000 votes. Fittingly, it was Mr Lacey's 62nd birthday.

"A wonderful present," he remarked as the inevitable media scrum descended on him outside Powys County Council Offices in Brecon.

In an historic turn of events a rampant Labour Party took 34 of the 40 Welsh seats. Plaid Cymru retained the four it held and the Liberal Democrats won Montgomeryshire and the marginal gain by Mr Lacey.

A husband-and-wife team will be sitting on the Labour benches, Julie Morgan, who won Cardiff North from the Tories, will join her husband, Rhodri, who comfortably retained Cardiff West. Four of Labour's 34 Welsh MPs are women.

The turn-round in Tory fortunes is unprecedented. In the 1983 election, when Margaret Thatcher's powers were at their height, the party held 14 seats in Wales and boasted that the Principality was turning blue.

Some 14 years later, as the dust settles, recriminations began. Sir Eric Howells, president of the Welsh Conservative Party, said bitterly: "We lost because we were divided and a party divided will always lose. And after 18 years people believed it was time for a change."

Ron Davies, who is expected to become Secretary of State for Wales, claimed that history was being rewritten. "This is the best result ever for us in Wales."

Plaid Cymru, which failed to live up to its forecast of gaining at least one extra seat, was subdued.

Marc Phillips, the party chairman, maintained that "the Labour tidal wave" had rendered the task impossible.

Plaid Cymru's leader, Dafydd Wigley, insists that the option of independence should be included in the referendum Labour proposes to hold.

Support for an elected assembly is finely balanced. A large number of people are undecided - some estimates suggest up to 30 per cent.

Electorates still making up their minds hold the key, while opponents constantly refer to the result of the 1979 referendum, when Wales voted "no" by 4-1.

Mr Davies, the architect of Labour's proposals, stresses that a priority of the assembly would be to bring under control Wales's burgeoning quangoes, which account for about a third of the Welsh Office's annual £6bn budget.

Calls for a cull of Tory place-men running the quangoes are being voiced *sotto voce*.

Tony Blair told a Wales Labour Party conference earlier this year that he would campaign for a "yes" vote.

That undertaking promises to bind him closer to party activists in Wales, who yesterday were basking in post-election euphoria as well as temperatures up in the 70s.

Revealed: the secret of Labour's union task force

Christian Wolmar

A secret team of 9,000 trade unionists was deployed by the Labour Party during the election campaign.

The existence of the trade union task force was kept secret to avoid criticisms from the Tories about the links between Labour and the unions, which remain an important source of funding for the party.

Even when the party discussed its organisational structure of task forces at its Millbank campaign headquarters, it never revealed the existence of the trade union force.

A Millbank insider, who sat near the team, said: "They were told not to reveal their existence

and not to discuss their work. It was very successful as nobody realised how important the volunteers were."

The Independent has discovered that a group of 10 full-time staff at Millbank co-ordinated an enormous team of trade union volunteers, which included many trade union staff.

They were deployed, as necessary, to go on the stump in key seats and staff the phone banks which were used for much of the canvassing. The number of willing activists was a major weapon in key seats.

As well as co-ordinating this little army, the unit, headed by John Mann, the national officer responsible for links between the party and the unions, liaised

with the trade unions over their support for the campaign and kept them informed about it.

According to Millbank staff, "the trade union leaders were not gagged. They just knew what was expected of them and kept quiet. But we did tell them about what was going on".

Labour was surprised that the Tories never really attacked the party about its links with the unions.

After a flurry in the third week of the campaign over Labour's commitment to allow unions to force companies to recognise them, if a majority of workers want recognition, unions were one of the several dogs that did not bark in the Tory campaign.



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It's pure delight. It couldn't have happened to a nicer bloke - Neil Kinnock

blair's britain

First twins in the Commons are Angela (L, Wallasey) and Maria (L, Garston) Eagle

At 24, the youngest MP of all

Claire Ward has just won the Watford seat, and at 24 is the youngest female MP in the new Parliament, although not the most inexperienced. She is already a councillor and Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, in Hertfordshire, with Fran Abrams.

Speaking on the Embankment at Westminster yesterday she said she expected the influx of new women to make a difference.

"I think men are going to find some of the women MPs looking for some real changes," she says. "We don't want to see a boys' club any more. I'm sure there will be a little resistance but I am sure there will be a forceful voice from women MPs. Women have a different perspective on politics. Quite often it is more about finding solutions than always battling."

Photograph: Brian Harris



Boys' club grudgingly gives room to women

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Watch out, boys - they're coming. From now on, the House of Commons will no longer be a men-only club - albeit one which has grudgingly opened its doors to women.

Yesterday, women MPs, both new and old, welcomed in the dawn of an era in which they hope their critical mass will begin to shift centuries of male domination.

In the new intake of MPs there will be a total of 116 women. 101 of them sitting on the Labour benches. In the last Parliament there were 60.

It has hardly been a storming of the bastions, of course. Sev-

leaves there will be changes, both physical and cultural.

They hope for a less confrontational atmosphere, more constructive approaches to raising issues which matter to women, including child care and education.

Margaret Hodge, who came MP for Barking in 1992, says she believes there is now a critical mass of women in the House which will help to blow fresh air into some of its fustier corners.

"What I have felt in the past is not necessarily that the men were sexist, but that they felt uncomfortable with us in their club," she says.

"They were used to conducting their day-to-day lives in their own way. I think we have probably cracked it now."

The arguments will continue to rage, of course, over whether the number of women in Parliament really believe women can be just as confrontational as men.

While some believe women can be just as confrontational as men, "look at Margaret Thatcher," they say - others believe they are more constructive.

One sitting woman MP says that in committees, female ministers have a different approach and are easier to deal with.

"It doesn't mean you get any further but at least you don't constantly feel you are in some sort of duel," she says.

Angela Smith, who has won Basildon, in Essex, was one of 35 candidates selected through all-women shortlists before an industrial tribunal put a halt to Labour's controversial policy last year.

She believes the lists "set an agenda" for the party and that even though the lists have gone, the momentum will continue. She hopes the sight of more women MPs will keep new entrants coming in.

The men were not necessarily sexist, but felt uncomfortable with us in their club

ent-nine years after the election of Britain's first woman MP, some might even think it sad that having five male MPs to every one female was a cause for celebration.

But the number of women in Parliament, which has crept up gradually ever since the Irish republican Countess Markievicz refused to take her Dublin City seat, has finally taken its great leap forward.

While the new intake is still searching in vain for the ladies, of which there are there desperately few, the old guard plans to take significant new ground. All the intake of '97 be-

Tories regain lost ground in the shires

David Walker

The Conservatives yesterday won control of several of the Home Counties, Lincolnshire and Hampshire in a set of local election gains that go some way to salve the wounds the party suffered in the general election.

Most Tory wins were at the expense of the Liberal Democrats. But Labour lost some significant seats too, including that of the leader of Essex County Council, Chris Pearson.

He seems to have been blamed for the recent industrial action by the Fire Brigades Union in protest at budget plans prepared by the Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition in the county.

Results did not all go in the same direction. The Liberal Democrats won control of Torbay and Newbury, both newly-minted "unitary" councils. The Conservative cause in the shire counties may have benefited from the adjustment of boundaries. In Bedfordshire, a gain for the Tories, the loss of

Luton - a new unitary - may have helped their cause.

Labour consolidated its hold in the North, including Durham and Northumberland. It took Cumbria, where no party had been in overall control since 1985. Labour dominance of urban England was confirmed as it took control of such new unitary authorities as Blackpool and Nottingham, Plymouth and Warrington.

The Tories look unlikely to upset Labour dominance in the Local Government Association, the body which will be negotiating on local authorities' behalf with the Government.

The Tory recovery in the counties is partly a reflection of the party's dire performance in the last elections in 1993, when they were left in control of Buckinghamshire alone. In some counties the Conservative comeback is unmistakable. In Hampshire the Tories gained 19 seats, all at the expense of the Liberal Democrats, who also lost a seat to Labour.

For full results see Monday's edition of *The Independent*.

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Feathers fly in battle of the twitchers and the shooters

Matthew Brace

The prospect of an internationally important bird reserve lying next to a popular bird shoot was always going to try the patience of twitchers and shooters alike.

However, a dispute over the leasing of marshes near Topsham, on the Exe estuary, Devon, has grown into a conflict between those who like to gaze at their birds through binoculars and those who prefer to view them through a gun sight.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) wants to extend its reserve at Bowling Green Marshes by gaining access to a stretch of muddy foreshore and imposing a no-shooting policy.

The Devon Wildfowling Club also wants to negotiate a lease with the Crown Commissioners, owners of the foreshore, to offer a generous section of shootable waterfront to their members. A local nobleman and a magazine editor have joined the fray and the wildfowling is receiving anonymous hate mail, although not from the RSPB.

The RSPB fears bird-watchers will get a bad deal if they do not win the lease. The charity's regional manager, John Waldon, said: "Wildfowling has always gone on but we would like to



Shot by both sides: Birdwatchers are locked in dispute with gun enthusiasts over the marshland near Topsham. Photograph: John Voos

whose family owns other large stretches of the foreshore near his Powderham Castle seat on the western banks of the estuary, has got involved, pledging support for what he terms the "working-man's sport of wildfowling."

Last week the editor of *Field* magazine, Jonathan Young, Peter Young's son, joined forces in the campaign to prevent the RSPB getting the remaining available foreshore, saying it wanted "to stop local people enjoying their old sport." Now, in mid-spring, the debate is intensifying as migrating birds return to the marshes from winter sojourns abroad. Last week the first sand martins flew in, swooping low over the marshes, and little egrets, rare in Britain until a few years ago, were also seen along the water's edge. Later this year, when many species are preparing to leave again for their flights south, the Crown Commissioners will make their decision on who gets the foreshore.

see it zoned in an area that will not spoil people's enjoyment of the reserve. It's not asking an awful lot to have a no-shooting zone around the reserve. "Most of the time wildfowling is very good but there is always the risk that they will shoot a

rare bird by accident. If they win, they win, and I'm sure they will police the site well but I'm also sure bird-watchers will be disappointed that their bird-watching will be disrupted."

Although Mr Waldon accepted that while wildfowling has increased

in the area recently, according to an RSPB study in 1986 it then accounted for 1 per cent of all shooting on the Exe estuary. The Devon Wildfowling Club insists that the land would protect it from untrained, rogue shooters. The club's

secretary, Peter Young, said: "All our members have to pass a very stringent test. Unless they get a 100-per cent test on bird recognition, they cannot shoot. At the moment, this is crown land and anyone can shoot on crown land, no matter how poor

their bird recognition might be."

In a recent disturbing development Mr Young received an anonymous hate letter on the issue of who should get access to this stretch of foreshore. Lord Courtenay, eldest son of the 17th Earl of Devon,

Spending watchdog accused of errors

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

MPs on the Commons Public Accounts Committee have been criticised for producing a report containing errors and failing to consider fresh evidence. Tony Danaher, a partner in Tamesis, a London-based marketing company, is writing to the PAC to ask for the inquiry into financial irregularities at the Plymouth Development Corporation (PDC) to be reopened after publication of its report this month.

The complaint raises the issue of whether investigations by the committee, whose findings are privileged and so cannot be challenged in court, are thorough enough. There is also the question of natural justice, as an organisation criticised in the report was not given the opportunity to respond or provide evidence. Mr Danaher said: "We were quite willing to give evidence and explain details of what went wrong... But no one asked us to. The first we heard about the report was when it appeared in the *Independent*."

The National Audit Office, whose investigation formed much of the PAC's report, admitted Tamesis had not been spoken to directly. A spokeswoman said: "Most of the work was carried out by the external auditors. The former chief executive, John Collinson, and the department provided information." The PDC was set up in 1993 to stimulate redevelopment of three waterfront sites in the city.

The PAC report criticised Mr Collinson for claiming £9,200 expenses he was not entitled to. But it also criticised the contract with Tamesis. In particular, it says it was not let by competitive tender, but Mr Danaher was able to show the *Independent* detailed tender

documents. He said: "There were three other companies involved and we had to do a lot of detailed work in order to win the contract."

The report concluded: "The corporation, by accepting insufficiently specific invoices from their marketing consultants, in effect relinquished control of the marketing budget." However, Tamesis says this style of invoices was specifically requested by the corporation. The report also says Tamesis sent three staff members to the US for a prize-giving ceremony for the two-handed transatlantic yacht race, which the corporation sponsored. Mr Danaher said: "We only sent one member of staff, on the request of the corporation, to provide press-officer services. They must have confused us with the two civil servants who travelled to the US with their families."

Mr Danaher says the MPs' inquiry missed the main point: "The... whole way the corporation was set up, run and funded was wrong. It would have been much better to have given the £37.5m to the local council to regenerate the area, rather than purchasing in a whole new agency which had enormous setting-up costs. The local councillors on the board of the corporation were far more competent than the private-sector people, who were there because they were hoping to make a profit."

The concept of urban-development corporations, introduced by the Tories in the 1980s, has had a mixed record. There have been some successes at attracting private finance but critics have pointed out that a lot of money has been spent on unsuccessful schemes and there have been several instances of waste highlighted by the NAO.

Thefts are a bad sign for tourists

Alan Murdoch

An outbreak of roadside kleptomania has left unknown numbers of tourists wandering the Irish countryside with nowhere to go.

The current vogue for Irish pubs across Europe, the United States and now even as far away as Peking, has seen attractive old iron road signs - pointing towards quaint and obscure destinations - become prized decorative artefacts in Irish bars from California to northern Italy.

But the disappearing place-names have created major headaches for local authorities. Some officials suspect that the growth of hundreds of new Irish pubs is the prime cause of the disappearance of single-name "finger signs" at a cost of £60 each. A spokesman for the

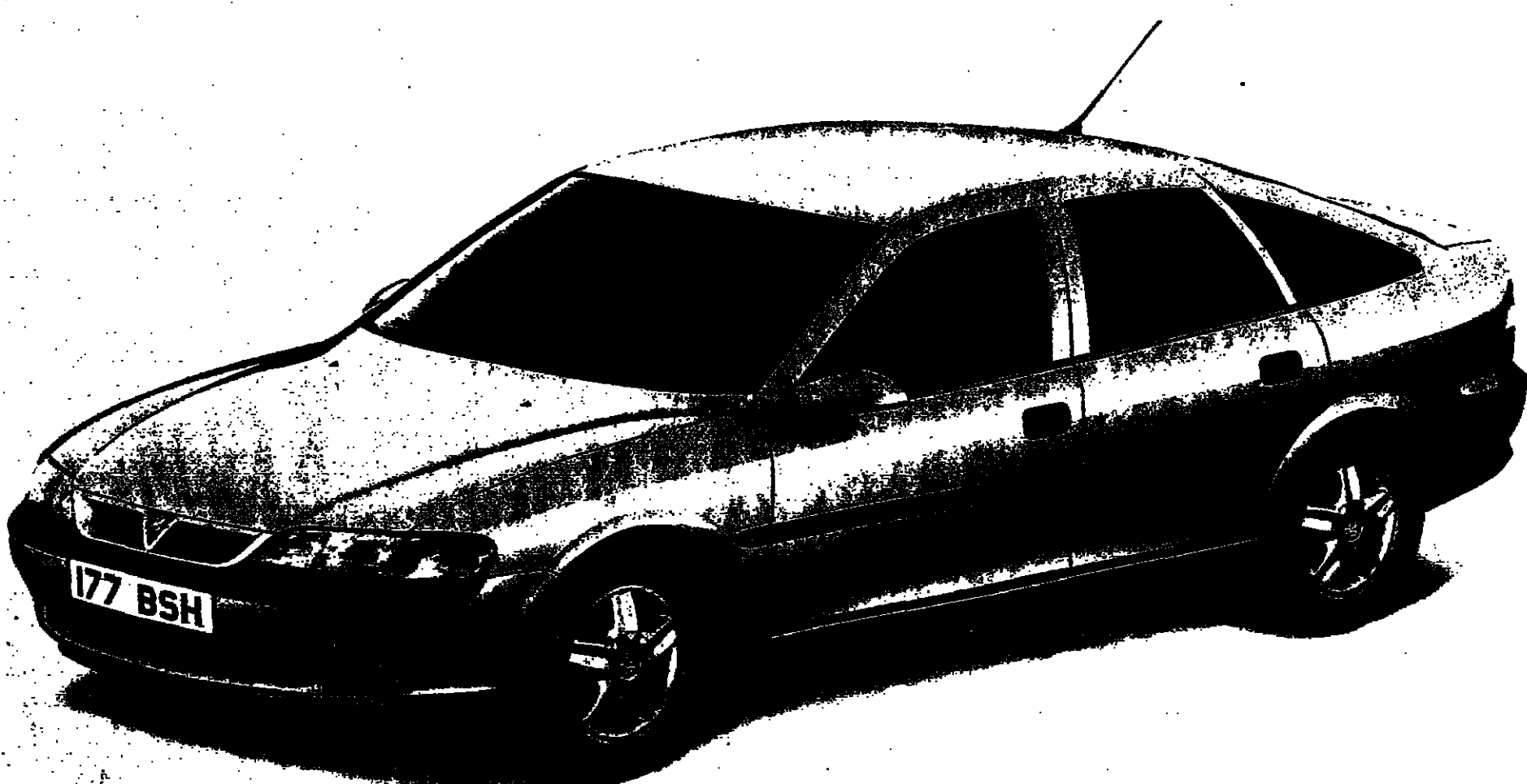
Department of the Environment in Dublin confirmed they had been receiving complaints from fraught overseas visitors baffled by the country's lack of a sense of direction, so to speak.

Prime targets for the light-fingered dealers providing signs for pub interiors are counties such as Cork, Galway, Kerry and Donegal, where endless quiet cross-roads mean no shortage of unusual names from Ballydehob to Ballinferriter and Glencombkille (Glenam Cholm Cille).

Kerry is perhaps the most targeted area. According to road supervisor Gearoid MacGearailt the problem has been apparent for the past five or six years.

"They're looking particularly especially for the old-fashioned cast-iron ones. If they're up you're in trouble," he said.

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Equal footing: A female soldier from the Royal Irish regiment (Home Services) on patrol in Northern Ireland

Photograph: Wendy Summerall

Women soldiers join frontline war against the IRA

Female troops face snipers in bandit country

Christopher Bellamy
Defence Correspondent

Female soldiers are now part of front-line British Army foot patrols and potential targets for IRA snipers in the "bandit country" of south Armagh.

The Army says its policy has not changed and that women are not "active" components of what it describes as fire teams. But observers in the province say they have noticed more female soldiers operating on the front line as the Army has intensified its operations in Northern Ireland in the face of and upsurge in IRA attacks.

One of the sightings which sparked interest occurred recently in south Armagh, near where 23-year-old Lance Bombardier Stephen Restorick was killed by a sniper on 12 February. During a day of intensive searches, a patrol of eight soldiers was moving off Cathedral Road, Armagh. Two of them were women. When a passer-by expressed surprise, a male soldier said "Oh, yes, mate. We've got loads of those now".

"They don't look like women in full battle kit," a witness said. "Because only their faces are visible. But one of them turned round and I saw it was a woman. Then another one stepped over a wall, and I could see it was a woman by the way she moved."

The witness said the soldiers spoke with English accents, suggesting they were from 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery - Lance Bombardier Restorick's unit - which has completed a six-month tour in the province.

An Army spokesman said women were not part of the fire team in infantry patrols, but wore helmets and body armour and carried personal weapons - the SA-80 rifle - for self-defence. Whereas the riflemen carry SA-80s with telescopic sights, everyone else has non-optical "iron sights", which women usually carry. He said women were not put in high-risk situations - for example, where search dogs were being used.

The presence of women patrolling in south Armagh is sensitive because IRA snipers have been targeting British troops. The Royal Ulster Con-

stabulary and the Army recently seized two high-powered Barrett sniper rifles - 5ft long, and firing a bullet half an inch in diameter over 2km, plus other weapons and ammunition in an operation two weeks ago. The IRA has been using the Barretts, which are effective precision weapons up to about a kilometre, since 1992.

Women now make up 6.1 per cent of the Army, and 7.1 per cent of the jobs in the Army are open to them, although 1991 guidelines prevent their employment in frontline roles in the infantry, armour and units of the artillery and engineers directly supporting them. Women are now part of artillery units. However, the Army said, when artillery troops were employed as infantry in Northern Ireland, the same rules applied as to infantry, and women do not take an "active" role. The women would have been assigned to the patrol in case it had to search civilians.

The Army said it has long been standard practice for patrols which might have to set up vehicle checkpoints to have women with them. They often come from the locally recruited Royal Irish Regiment. Women also perform key roles in the Intelligence Corps and the Royal Military Police.

The Army has not gone out of its way to advertise women's security role in Ireland. On one occasion recently, a press photographer attempted to get a picture of a woman who was part of a British Army patrol. "Fuck off," she said. "Or we'll nick you". He thought better of it.



PAUL DANIELS THREATENS TO QUIT BRITAIN IF LABOUR WINS THE ELECTION

THE MIRROR 19TH MARCH 1997

Rare butterfly puts water firm's plan to flight

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

A rare butterfly is helping a water company save half a million pounds off the cost of an expensive sewage scheme.

The presence of the endangered Durham argus butterfly on a cliff at Horden, Co Durham, forced Northumbrian Water to think about how to avoid placing construction works on its habitat.

The alternative engineering works it came up with for building a £9.4m tunnel and pipeline taking treated sewage effluent out to sea should end up being cheaper than the conventional method.

The caterpillars of the small chocolate and orange butterfly live on rock roses growing on the cliff top magnesian limestone grasslands of the Durham coastline.

The habitat at Horden, near Easington, is a government-designated site of special scientific interest, largely because of the butterfly's presence. But it also lies between a new coastal sewage treatment works and the sea.

In normal circumstances, the water company would have created a construction site on the cliff top and another down on the beach.

Engineers would have sunk a big vertical shaft down to sea level from the top of the cliff, then joined this to another below-sea level tunnel dug from the beach to take the effluent out to sea.

But the butterfly's presence made the company think twice about cliff top works, and it has decided to dig a longer, sloping tunnel from a construction site set 350m back from the cliff top, avoiding the argus's haunts.

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The world warms to Blair's victory

Europe hopes poll will lance Eurosceptic boil

Sarah Helm
Brussels

The euphoria which spread over much of Britain on Thursday night had by yesterday wafted on a breeze across the English Channel.

By midday, patches of that euphoric haze appeared to be settling over several continental capitals. Politicians and diplomats in Paris, Bonn, Brussels and the Hague were heard talking in light-headed, optimistic tones about Tony Blair, the new Prime Minister of Britain.

Not only did the election bring predictions, all over Britain, of a fundamental shift in the political scene, but here too, in continental Europe, Mr Blair's victory was being greeted as a sign of a fundamental shift in the European Union's political landscape.

The dominant sentiment was that at last the rest of the Europe would be able to get on with the job of building a more integrated Europe without the destructive carping from one recalcitrant member state.

Whatever cautiousness Mr Blair might have shown so far on the issue of European integration, it has always been evident to other states that Mr Blair views himself as pro-European, and will work to restore a harmonious relationship between London and Brussels.

Jacques Santer, the European Commission president, could barely conceal his relief at the prospect of speeding the negotiations in the InterGovernment Conference (IGC) towards completion of an Amster-

dam Treaty, held up by 18 months of Conservative stubbornness.

Mr Santer applauded Mr Blair's "outstanding victory", saying that he had come to power at a "crucial stage" of the union's development. He listed the challenges of the IGC, which included enlargement, economic and monetary union, budgetary reform and completing the single market.

More significant, however, than the displays of sudden affection for British leader was the speed with which Britain's partners sought to interpret the British election result as a blow against Euro-scepticism not

Euro-sceptic sentiment in the current French elections, said: "This is a blow against British Euroscepticism." He added: "This election marks a step back from Euroscepticism."

As the euphoric haze wafts away again, and the dreary process of EU negotiation starts up again, some of the hopes among Britain's partners may prove to be wishful thinking.

However, the messages of goodwill from the Continent signalled more than just a change in tone. What is evident in the pronouncements of many European leaders is a genuine desire for Britain to elect a prime minister with a sufficiently clear vision and a party united enough to take a lead in building Europe. There is a strong sense in many capitals that the vision of the old elite is losing its clarity. The Franco-German engine is running down and there is widespread talk of a leadership vacuum.

When Mr Blair meets his partners for his first European summit on 23 May he will have his first real chance to demonstrate that he wishes to take up such a leadership role.

Mr Santer told him yesterday: "We look forward to the United Kingdom, under your government, playing its rightful leading role within the union."

Mr Santer was candid in his recognition that a dose of positive British pragmatism could go down well.

"Never more than now has the European Union needed strong British commitment with its unique combination of pragmatism and efficiency," he said.

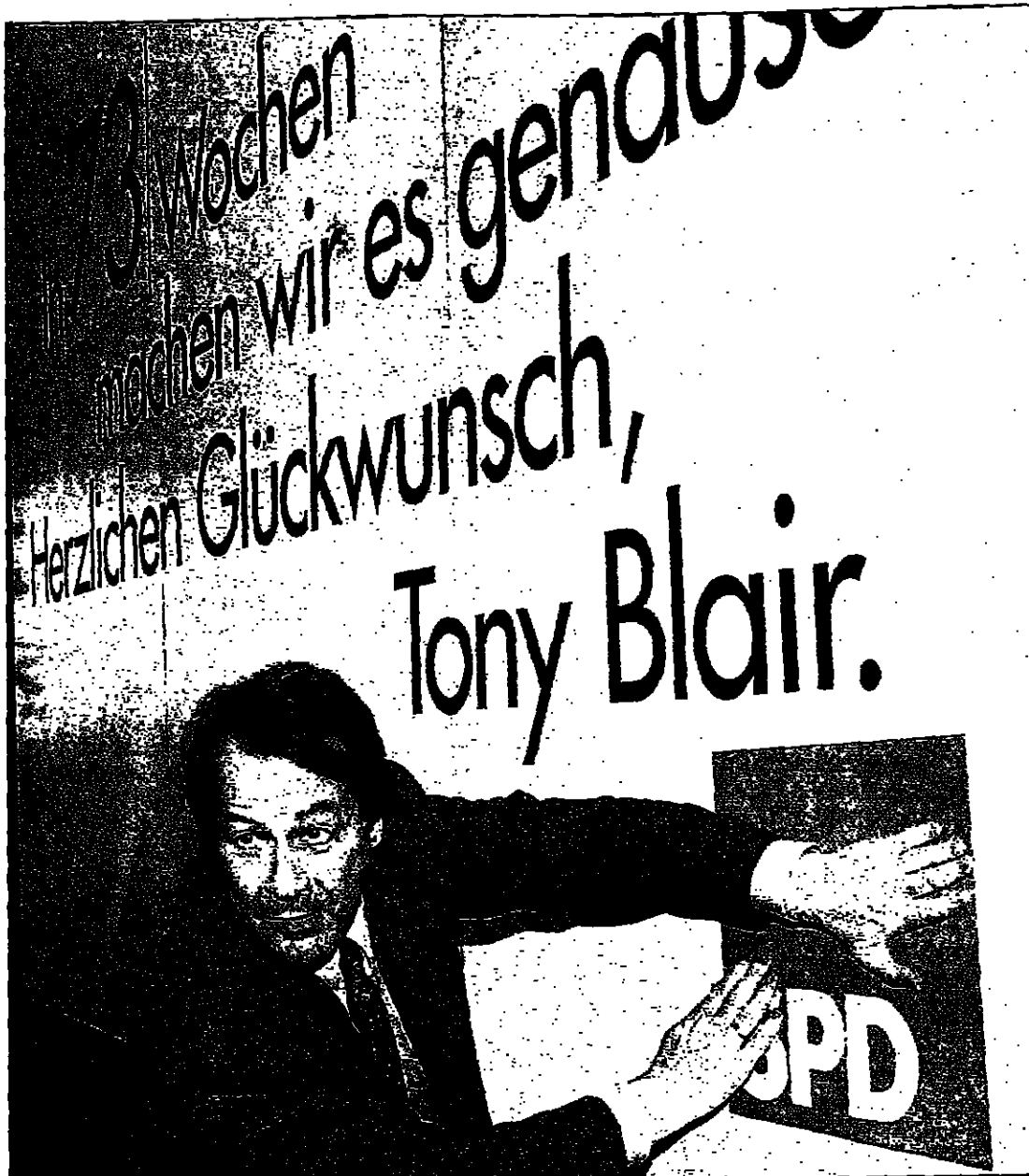
"We look forward to the UK playing its rightful role"

just in Britain, but across the union. Every European Union country has experienced Euroscepticism in recent years.

Now it seems that Britain, the country which has seen the most virulent form of the Eurosceptic virus, has rejected it at the polls.

Mr Kohl, who is himself fighting German doubts about the single currency, was swift to hold up the British result as a lesson to sceptics everywhere.

And Hervé de Charette, the French foreign minister, whose government is also struggling to counter



Sign of the times: A German election poster being unveiled outside Social Democratic Party headquarters in Bonn yesterday. It reads: "In 73 weeks we will do the same. Congratulations Tony Blair" Photograph: AP

New York Brits join Pravda party

David Osborne
New York

If you couldn't be on the South Bank yesterday for the Tony Blair victory rally, Pravda, South of Houston - better known as SoHo - was a reasonable alternative. There was no rocking with Neil Kinnock, but we did have Bianca.

There was a wide choice of election-count parties in New York on Thursday. Barclays had billionaire financier George Soros and fine wines atop the World Trade Center while the British consulate lured hundreds with a real swingometer and members of the Royal Marines Band sporting pith helmets and bugles.

With apologies to them, however, the hot ticket assuredly was Pravda. How could you resist an evening laid on by the Labour Party (US Branch) in one of lower Manhattan's hippest joints? And called Pravda too.

This was no rebellion by New York Labourites wishing to reassert their cloth-cap heritage. True, the Pravda kitchen made an attempt at proletarian fare by offering cheese and ham toasted sandwiches. And if you really asked around, a smattering of long-standing Labour Party members could be found.

Instead, it was New Labour-New York on parade. For several months, some of Manhattan's most famous refugees from Tony Blair - like former *Times* editor Harold Evans - had been leading a much-publicised effort to raise dollars for Blair. This was their night to bask in the victory happening thousands of miles away.

Champagne socialists? Bollinger Bolsheviks? A sponsor for the night was Heidecker. Heidecker Hampsteaders? Call them what you like, they won't care. Nor would Robbie Coltrane, who was also there. Nor Lauren Hutton, who explained her presence thus: "Two of my former boyfriends were British."

Later, Ms Jagger and I find ourselves together in a television studio uptown as guests on an election night special. The news lands that Michael Portillo is out, and she smiles.

To millions she, confesses: she adores Tony Blair and now, with him in power, she intends moving. Bianca is coming to London.

Global leaders eager to meet new voice of Britain

Foreign Staff
and agencies

Tony Blair won warm congratulations from world leaders yesterday, many of whom will be eager to sound him out soon.

The French President Jacques Chirac said he would be happy to meet Mr Blair soon in the French capital. A Franco-British summit is likely to follow shortly. France and Britain have moved much closer in their positions on Europe, and the change of government in London is unlikely to derail that.

Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl perceived in John Major's fate a famous victory over Euro-scepticism. "Voters did not like the anti-European rhetoric of the past few days and weeks and this should be a lesson for all those who want to win votes with anti-European polemics," Mr Kohl told reporters.

He was quick to dispense advice, urging Mr Blair to return Britain to its rightful place in the heart of Europe: "I'm sure the new government will see very quickly and very clearly that standing on the sidelines amid all the developments in Europe will

not bring any advantages for Britain... I would welcome it if Labour were more friendly towards Europe than the Conservatives were."

A White House spokesman said President Bill Clinton called Mr Blair on Thursday night "to congratulate him on his victory". It was no secret that there was little love lost between the White House and Downing Street while Mr Major was the occupant: the Conservative party launched a search for damaging information on Mr Clinton in British files during the 1992 election. The spokesman said Mr Clinton had

also tried to reach Mr Major, but had been unable to get through to him.

Chris Patten, Governor of Hong Kong and a former chairman of the Conservative Party, congratulated Mr Blair but said he was taken aback by the result. "As a Conservative, although not an active Conservative at the moment, the result comes as something of a shock," Mr Patten told Hong Kong television.

Mr Patten's job will be abolished when Hong Kong reverts to Chinese rule at the end of next month, and there has been speculation that he will be a candidate to succeed Mr

Major. He played this down yesterday, while not ruling it out. "I wouldn't advise anybody to put any money on me. One of the things which I lack in the party leadership stake is a seat in the Commons. I wouldn't take that seriously," he said.

Hong Kong's leading democrat, Martin Lee, urged Mr Blair yesterday to "actively defend" Hong Kong's democratic institutions after the colony's 1 July transition to Chinese rule.

In Australia, the opposition Labor Party said Mr Blair's success was in part a result of the lessons he learned

from the Australian Labor Party. "He learned a lot from us, as he would acknowledge himself," said Kim Beazley. "There's a great deal that we've got to learn from Tony Blair's election victory," he added.

Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral said relations between India and Britain were "very good", and he hoped to further their close ties. Mr Gujral said he had invited Mr Blair to visit. However, state-run All India Radio said the Labour Party's stand on Kashmir had been ambivalent and it suggested Mr Blair take a fresh look on the matter.

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Mobutu enters first talks with rebel leader

Tina Susman
Associated Press

Pointe Noire - Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko left his country's capital of Kinshasa yesterday for the first face-to-face talks with rebel leader Laurent Kabila.

Mr Mobutu has insisted he would never bow to Mr Kabila's demand to resign, but his illness and the international pressure to step down may force him to do so. The United States and other countries want a cease-fire in Zaire's civil war, the establishment of a transitional government that includes rebels and opposition parties, and a plan for free, fair elections.

After initially refusing to board a helicopter at Pointe Noire which was to fly him to a South African naval vessel for the talks, Mr Mobutu eventually arrived on the SAS Outeniqua late yesterday afternoon.

Zairian Foreign Minister Gerard Kamanda wa Kamanda said the vibration of the helicopter ride would have been too hard on Mr Mobutu, 66, who is suffering from prostate cancer.

U.S. envoy Bill Richardson, who has been in the region since Monday brokering the peace talks, said "the main elements of any agreement will be dealt with by the Zairians themselves."

"In my view, this meeting will produce a process that involves a transfer of power and hopefully a transitional, inclusive government," he added.

South African President Nelson Mandela was already aboard the ship to help mediate the talks. "We are dealing with two outstanding leaders who are conscious of the importance of an amiable settlement," Mr Mandela said. "I am confident they will realise the importance of a peaceful settlement. I know few leaders who have made military gains and nevertheless been committed to peace as Mr Kabila has."

State television in Harare, Zimbabwe, yesterday quoted Mr Kabila as saying the talks would be postponed until Saturday "because Mobutu has changed his mind again".

Once all parties were aboard the ship, it set sail for Soyo, an Angolan coastal town at the point where the Zaire-Angola borders meet. The talks are to be held in a windowless, air-conditioned container aboard the ship and will be presided over by Mr Mandela and U.N. special envoy Mohamed Sahnoun.

An American diamond miner in Lubumbashi, meanwhile, said troops from Angola as well as Angolan tanks and heavy equipment were involved

in the rebel push toward the capital. The United States has warned Angola not to get involved in the conflict in Zaire.

Angolan Foreign Minister Venancio de Moura denied reports that Angolan troops were fighting alongside the rebels.

"Once again, we categorically deny (these reports). We want for there to be a peaceful process in Zaire, which will modify the regime which for about 32 years systematically destabilised Angola," de Moura said. Angola's formerly Marxist government has strong reasons to hope for the fall of Mobutu, who allowed Angolan rebels to ship weapons through Zaire for 20 years.



On the road: Rwandan refugees in the village of Biaro, near Kisangani, Zaire, where many died from illness and exhaustion. Photograph: Sebastiao Salgado

Sun sets on realm of the great dictator

A few miles west of the Zairean capital Kinshasa, beside the great cataracts on the Congo river, lies the military base of Camp Tshatsi. Here, guarded by the praetorians of his Special Presidential Detachments (DSP), the last of the great post-colonial dictators has finally gone to ground.

It is a suitably uninspiring location for Mobutu Sese Seko's last stand. In the camp, visitors to his villa drive past crumbling barracks and a vehicle park full of dead armoured cars, relics of the President's Cold War popularity with the West.

Outside the gate, two small guns stand on broken wheels, rusting in symbolic defiance of the president's enemies. Members of the DSP slouch here and there beyond the 12ft railings or sprawl on the grass.

For three decades these forces have been enough to overawe the people of Kinshasa, and Mr Mobutu's dwindling supporters still maintain they can save the day against the rapidly advancing rebels of Lau-

Ed O'Loughlin witnesses the final paroxysms of one of Africa's most corrupt regimes

vigour. This week he looked more like the dying man he is supposed to be.

For observers in Kinshasa, the press conference was a revelation. Not only did it suggest that Mr Mobutu was after all seriously ill, but it was also the first hint that he was bowing to pressure to stand down.

Earlier, his aides emphasised that he had no intention of accepting South African and US proposals for a meeting Mr Kabila on a South African ship off Gabon. Mr Kabila was saying he would attend, but only to participate in "a short ceremony" at which Mr Mobutu would stand down.

Mr Mobutu has little left to bargain with, but diplomats believe he will do what he can to hang on to power for as long as possible. So it is believed he may be under the influence of military figures and possibly family members who are not fully informing him of the gravity of the situation.

There are also suggestions that elements in the divided French diplomatic service may be encouraging Mr Mobutu to cling on, for reasons that have more to do with internal French party politics than external national interests.

Whatever misgivings the president's camp had about meeting Mr Kabila were brushed aside by Mr Richardson on Wednesday. Some diplomats speculate that Mr Mobutu may have been told his family's prospects of a comfortable life in exile would suffer if his procrastination led to an assault on Kinshasa.

While the stick-and-carrot details of the initiative remain conjectural, it is no secret the central thrust of the US-South African initiative was always to find a way for Mr Mobutu to step down with dignity.

The presence of President Nelson Mandela at the talks would not only serve as a guarantee that any deal struck would be honoured but also help to anaesthetise Mr Mobutu's ego while diplomatic surgery was carried out. He may be brutal and corrupt but if he retires now he will be waived off into the political sunset in a haze of congratulations.

Few outside his inner circle doubt what the alternative is. One diplomat said the rebels are less than 250km to the east of the capital and other forces are reported to be waiting in Angola for the order to seize Zaire's main port at Matadi, closing the ring around Kinshasa.



Mobutu: Pressed to quit

rent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces. But this week, when fate finally came calling on Mobutu Sese Seko, it drove straight through the defences and up to the house.

The US special envoy, Bill Richardson, was protected by the Stars and Stripes and armed with a letter from Bill Clinton. It took two visits, interspersed with a trip to see Mr Kabila in Lubumbashi, but by Wednesday evening Mr Richardson was standing on the villa steps and announcing that he had achieved the improbable - Mr Kabila and Mr Mobutu were finally to meet. Mr Mobutu, in other words, was being winked out of his refuge and sent to negotiate his doom.

The 66-year-old president attended the press conference but said nothing. When he sat, his large hands, placed on his knees, served only to show how painfully thin his legs had become. Rumours abound that the surgery he had in Switzerland last year failed to arrest the effects of prostate cancer. Two months ago, when he returned from his convalescence in France, he surprised everybody with his apparent health and

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PARIS DAYS

It was one of the first warm days of spring. For only the second or third time this year, the café tables had colonised the entire pavement at the top of the Avenue Carnot, the most obscure of the 12 spokes of the Etoile, surrounding the Arc de Triomphe.

At one of the tables there sat a smartly dressed thirtysomething woman in a Paddington Bear hat. She was eating *steak haché* - raw mince meat and egg - with two male companions. Without warning, she uttered a piercing shriek and jumped to her feet. Fifty tables of French people stopped eating simultaneously (a significant achievement) and stared at madame. Had she found a cockroach in her lunch? Had one of her companions made an improper remark? Was a giant lizard eating the Eiffel Tower?

She stood pointing in silent, accusing horror at a tow-truck, which was removing an old and battered, black Citroën. It was her car, she loudly informed her pavement audience. Her tone was self-pitying, confident of sympathy, as if she had suffered some natural disaster. Worse

still, she protested, her dog was inside the car.

There was no laughter. The pavement audience was wholly on the side of madame. She scampered self-righteously after the tow truck, as rapidly as her high heels would allow. One of her companions followed. The audience watched, entranced, as they caught up with the truck two traffic lights away.

It was *"pas juste"*, the pavement audience concurred. It was probably *"illegale"*. "They" had no right to tow a car with a dog inside it. *"Le pauvre bête"* would be thirsty, and so on.

No voice was raised to suggest that madame should perhaps not have parked her car, and dog, utterly illegally, and obstructively, on the Rue Tilsit. This useful thoroughfare forms part of what we call the "baby Etoile", a one-way street which rings the Etoile itself, and provides a refuge for those motorists who prefer not to enter the most terrifying automotive whirlpool in the world. In London terms, it was as if madame had parked in Piccadilly Circus. She returned a few minutes



Café society: Anything can happen as smokers, coffee drinkers and world watchers pass the time of day with Parisian nonchalance

Photograph: Brian Harris

later, defeated but unabashed. "They" had brazenly refused to allow her even to recover her dog, she announced, scandalised. "They" had said they had a perfect right to take both

dog and car. "They" had said she could recover both from the car pound in exchange for Fr1,200 (£130). More grumbling of sympathy and discontent from the pavement

audience. Finally, Madame sat down and completed her, by now rather expensive, lunch. Mysterious scenes from Parisian life, number two: On the other side of the Etoile (no

one ever calls it the Place Charles de Gaulle), is the second grandest of the 12 spokes, the Avenue Foch. It would be truer to say that the Avenue Foch used to be grand. It now

has the reputation of being the home of the dubiously rich and foreign: in other words of Russians and Arabs and others living on newly laundered money (not everyone in the avenue, of course, but enough to tarnish its reputation).

The Avenue Foch, as a result, is also one of the places in Paris haunted by up-market, motorised prostitutes.

On our walk to school each morning, Charlie insists on making a slight detour along the Rue Rude (you cannot make these things up), which emerges on to the Avenue Foch just beside the Irish Embassy. On precisely this corner, on some mornings, and almost all lunchtimes and afternoons, a brand-new electric-blue Ford Sierra can be found, parked - illegally - with two wheels on the pavement.

In the driver's seat, to Charlie's puzzlement and intense curiosity, there is always the same "strange lady", wearing a shoulder-less, leopard-skin bodysuit. In the depths of the January and February cold, Charlie became concerned for the strange lady's warmth and welfare.

On the same day as the dog-in-a-car incident, two typically brutal-looking female traffic wardens were striding purposefully along the Avenue Foch towards the Rue Rude. Faithful as ever, Madame Leopardskin's blue Sierra was parked

on the corner of the Rue Rude. A lively confrontation seemed unavoidable.

When she saw the wardens coming, madame became agitated. She began to wave. The wardens waved enthusiastically back at her. The uniformed ladies on their best exchanged warm greetings with the uniformed lady on her beat. Then they walked on.

The obvious explanation is that the wardens were being paid off by Madame Leopardskin. This is not necessarily so. France operates on familiarity and routine. Strangers (and not just foreigners) have the rule-book thrown at them. For regulars (including foreigners), there is generally another rule book, kept under the counter, which is often called *"Système D"*.

The simple fact of being on the corner day after day, treating the traffic wardens with politeness, might easily be enough to win Madame Leopardskin her immunity from parking tickets.

The woman with the dog in the car evidently felt that she deserved the same kind of immunity. Hence, her genuine outrage when her car appeared before her table at the end of a towing hook. On reflection, it might be that the lunching woman had been using the old dog-in-the-car trick for years.

John Lichfield

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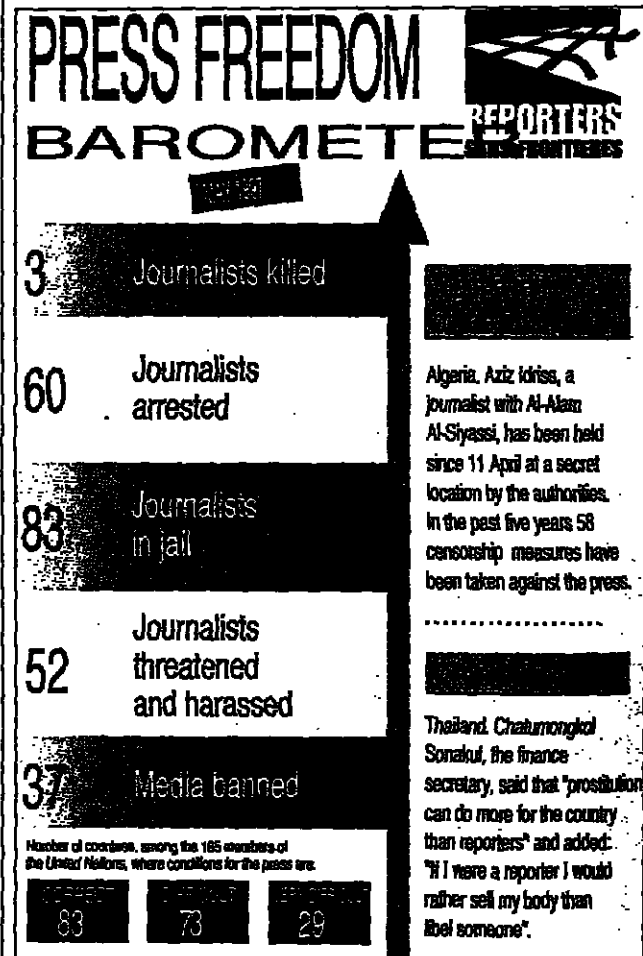
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Reporter jailed by China wins liberty award

The first Unesco World Press Freedom prize will today be awarded to a Chinese woman journalist still in prison.

Gao Yu, a freelance journalist, was detained in 1993 for "leaking state secrets" about Chinese political reforms in *Mirror Monthly*, a pro-Peking Hong Kong magazine. She has two years to serve. Her award will be collected by Timothy Baldwin, director-general of the World Association of Newspapers, at a ceremony in Bilbao, today is World Press Freedom day, the anniversary of the 1991 Declaration of Windhoek drawn up by African journalists to demand a free, independent and pluralistic media through-

out the African continent and the world.

The World Association of Newspapers is using today to draw attention to the importance of a free press as a barometer of democracy, to the large number of journalists currently in prison and to the fact only one-third of the world's countries have a truly free media.

In the last 10 years more than 500 journalists have been killed on duty and 180 journalists are known to be in prison. 16 of them in China, including Gao Yu.

From today, *The Independent* will carry a monthly barometer of press freedom prepared by *Reporters Sans Frontières*.

One woman's dangerous and lonely battle to break the Cosa Nostra

Andrew Gumbel
San Giuseppe Jato

When Giovanni Brusca, the notorious Mafia killer known as "The Pig", was arrested in Palermo in May last year, the mayor of his home town, San Giuseppe Jato, celebrated by displaying large photos of the assassinated anti-Mafia magistrates Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino outside the town hall.

But any hopes of an end to the long night of intimidation and violence in this most Mafia-ridden of hill towns in the Palermo hinterland quickly evaporated. The photos of Falcone and Borsellino - for whose deaths Brusca bears considerable responsibility - were burned within 24 hours. And although Brusca's band has vanished from San Giuseppe Jato, the oppressive atmosphere of fear and stagnation is as palpable as ever.

The arrest was not the decisive moment we hoped for. We know who the mafiosi are. They are still operating around here. Brusca's capture may sim-

thus depriving the town of what little social life it enjoyed along its two drab main streets. The Mafia's methods are ingeniously simple.

Since the state has been so absent from San Giuseppe for so long, almost no shop or business has a full set of valid permits and licences. If the Mafia does not like a particular bar owner, all it has to do is make an anonymous denunciation to the police or the state health inspectors. These are obliged by law to follow up any tip-off they receive and they quickly discover that the allegations are true.

Failure to produce an up-to-date health and safety certificate is punishable by closure under Italian law, and it is up to the local mayor to issue the closure order. "We've already got a terrible economic crisis and now more places are shutting. Not only that, but I'm being made to look like the bad guy when in fact the closures are nothing to do with me," said Mayor Maniscalco.

This is just one of many ways in which the town council is being discredited. This year Mayor Maniscalco has discovered that San Giuseppe's debt has jumped from the 300 million lire she had counted on in her budget calculations to nearly 10 times that figure. Why? One reason is a long-standing lawsuit between the council and two local property speculators over the fate of a former convent.

The nuns originally agreed to let the council take over the building to construct a crèche and elementary school. But before the paperwork went through the sisters were induced - no doubt through intimidation - into selling the property to the two speculators. The affair appeared to have been settled in the late 1980s - albeit unsatisfactorily - when the council was ordered to pay a modest fine for unauthorised construction on someone else's property. But unbeknown to Mayor Maniscalco, who took office in 1993, the fine was never paid and the case was sent back to court.

The Palermo tribunal which judged the case earlier this year could not understand why the council failed to send so much as a lawyer to the hearings - in fact it simply had not been informed - and imposed a punitive fine of nearly two billion lire.

In this, as in so many other affairs, it is near-impossible to tell where the bureaucratic obfuscation ends and the deliberate Mafia-influenced malice begins. But it is clear that the

tentacles of Cosa Nostra reach far into the state hierarchy.

Anyone genuinely interested in combating the Mafia, as the quietly courageous Mayor Maniscalco indubitably is, finds themselves on the receiving

end of a low-intensity conflict waged by other organs of the state as well as criminal bosses - a conflict that threatens at any moment to explode into devastating violence. And with the extension of Mafia power

comes the terrible isolation of those who seek to fight it.

In the last few weeks, testimony from former members of Brusca's gang has revealed a plan, never carried out, to kidnap and kill the 22-year-old son

of one of Maria Maniscalco's closest colleagues, council leader Gioacchino Lo Giudice, as well as a plan to murder Mrs Maniscalco herself.

Twice Mr Lo Giudice asked the council to pass a vote of

solidarity in his favour, but the first time nobody turned up and the second time the proceedings were boycotted by the centre-right opposition parties. A call for a public demonstration went equally unheeded, and Mr Lo

Giudice resigned. "He realised just how much he had risked, and saw no tangible support for his work," Mayor Maniscalco explained. "But I intend to carry on, no matter what it takes." This series continues next week.



Fist of fear: Salvatore 'Toto' Riina behind bars. His arrest saw the demise of a generation of mafiosi and the assertion of a new criminal order

Photograph: AP

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The new MAFIA

ply have served to strengthen groups that were in opposition to him," said San Giuseppe's mayor, Maria Maniscalco.

Perhaps the clearest sign of a new, as yet anonymous generation of mafiosi is to be found on the walls of the cemetery. Here graffiti has sprung up in recent weeks insulting Brusca and other members of his gang, notably Balduccio Di Maggio, the man whose testimony led to the arrest of the former head of Cosa Nostra, Totò Riina. In the sophisticated semiotic code of the Sicilian underworld, the graffiti is both a challenge to the old criminal order and the assertion of a new one.

After years of spectacular violence under the Corleonesi clan, to which Brusca and his friends belonged, the new Mafia has resorted to more traditional operating methods - quietly imposing a stranglehold on civic life and undermining the institutions of the state.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of their new tactics is the manipulation of petty bureaucracy. Since the beginning of the year the Mafia has forced a number of bars and restaurants in San Giuseppe to close,

significant shorts

Iranian ayatollah throws down gauntlet to EU

An influential Iranian cleric used his sermon at yesterday's prayers to attack Europe, deepening the dispute over terrorism charges. "The time when the West could threaten small, weaker nations is over and cannot return," Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati said, adding that the EU could not succeed in confronting Iran where the United States had failed. AP - Tehran

Balanced-budget deal in sight

President Bill Clinton and congressional leaders worked into the night polishing details of a pact to balance the budget while trimming taxes by about \$135bn (£84bn). With a conclusive handshake seemingly near, the White House and Republican leaders made plans for announcing a deal. AP - Washington

Biker's hairy experience

Police intercepted a booby-trapped beard-trimmer mailed to a jailed member of the Bandidos motorcycle gang. The authorities had been tipped off and scanned the package, finding 95g of explosive. AP - Copenhagen

Heroin Briton pleads guilty

Henry Callow, 53, a Briton, faces 10 years' prison and a \$4m (£2.5m) fine after pleading guilty to importing 12kg of heroin from Thailand into the US. AP - Boston

Transparent honesty

Yoichiro Iino, Mayor of Kitakata, 150 miles from Tokyo, said he would reprimand himself and halve his salary for six months for peeping into a women's bath through a glass door last month. Reuters - Tokyo

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Noah and Dick and the right to lie

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Lectures

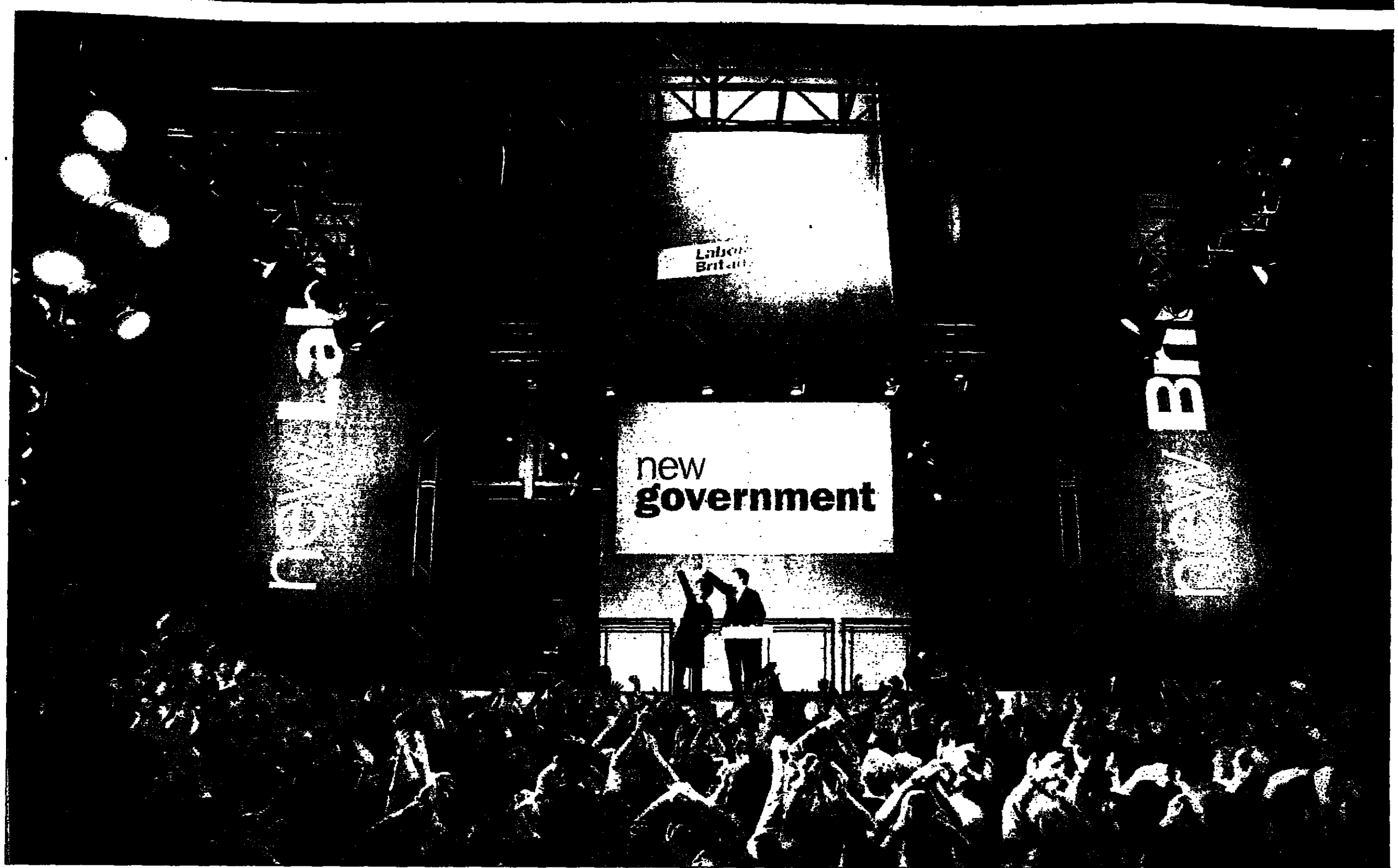
TOMORROW
Tate Gallery: Sarah O'Brien Twohig.
"CommonTate: painterly pop" 4pm.

TOMORROW

Tate Gallery: Sarah O'Brien Twohig, "CommonTate: painterly pop", 4pm.

election '97

صباحنا من الامم



The scene on the terrace outside the Royal Festival Hall, London, at 5am yesterday morning as Tony Blair and his wife Cherie Booth greet party supporters. Photograph: Brian Harris

Blair's long trek to victory

Independent writers reveal the inside story of how the New Labour campaign became unassailable.

By Paul Vallely, Christian Wolmar, Colin Brown, Steve Boggan and Barrie Clement

It was the longest election campaign this century. But the crusade to make the Labour Party electable once again had started long before that – when four men met to talk late into the night in a private room in the House of Commons.

The four were Tony Blair, then the party's spokesman for home affairs; Gordon Brown, the man who was later to step down from competing with Blair for the succession after the sudden death of John Smith; Peter Mandelson, the MP for Hartlepool who had been Labour's director of communications during the first of Neil Kinnock's two unsuccessful assaults on Downing Street in 1987; and Alastair Campbell, then political editor of the *Daily Mirror* and now Blair's press secretary. It was not one meeting, but a regular gathering. Yet the question was always the same: how to professionalise the party. With the election of Blair as leader it took on a new urgency and a new purpose.

It was no secret. An insistence that a transmutation of the party's inner core was under way was Mandelson's recurring theme during dinners with newspaper editors and political correspondents long before the concepts of Old and New Labour had been put into words. It was the first stage in the skilful wooing of the media which broke the almost universal bias against Labour which had been such a persistent handicap in previous elections.

The baseline was Michael Foot's shambles of a campaign in 1983 when Margaret Thatcher was returned with an increased majority of 144 – one seat less than Labour had gained in the landslide which followed the Second World War. Behind Thatcher's victory was a Tory election machine which had moved into a different gear; advisers like Maurice Saatchi, Tim Bell and Gordon Reece brought the tools of modern advertising, marketing and PR to bear on politics. Mandelson knew that if Labour were again to become electable the party had not just to compete but to leapfrog that into a new level of sophistication in these black arts.

In the months which followed he began to develop that, even as Blair was instilling a new discipline into the diffuse party he had inherited.

When the campaign began the Conservatives began to resort to the techniques which had served them well in the past. Their campaign, conceived by Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, Michael Heseltine, the deputy chairman, and Danny Finkelstein, head of Tory party research, was built around the personal appeal of John Major. "Honest John against Phoney Tony". But it lacked focus – they never resolved the issue of whether they were attacking Old Labour or New Tories. It also lacked a strategic momentum.

By contrast Labour had both. The party's campaign strategists owed much to the success of Bill Clinton's successful campaigns in the United States with its re-modelling of his party into New Democrats. Clinton – still smarting from the support which the Conservatives had given to his rival George Bush in opening British secret service files on Clinton's student days at Oxford – opened his election strategy at Blair's sides. The hierarchical structure of the Labour election machine was jettisoned and replaced with a dozen task forces

on key seats, party, media, trade unions, attack and rebuttal, presentation, regions, leader's office, message delivery, logistics and so on. It was a meritocracy with junior staff sometimes heading task forces including their own bosses.

As a result Labour has been following a detailed week-on-week electioneering strategy for almost a year – from last summer, leading up to the party conferences, the budget and the re-opening of Parliament after the Christmas break. It also learned from Clinton's people the techniques of how to stay on that strategy and deflect Tory attempts to derail it.

Throughout the campaign a central control room at the party's Millbank headquarters provided a rapid rebuttal unit which responded instantly to any new Conservative claim. Its liaison with the media was slick, feeding out approved messages and effectively emasculating attempts to undercut the official version of events. Its use of pagers, the Internet and faxes helped keep its candidates consistently "on message". Its advertising was focused and effective; at one point, private polling showed that Labour's "Britain Deserves

ry, but from petitions, and teams of volunteers began contacting voters by telephone and on the doorstep.

The aim was to find around 5,000 in each seat who would be enough to swing the election. Each was categorised into: against, undecided, solid Labour, second choice Labour, Labour but don't vote regularly, and switchers. Everyone in the three latter categories was then targeted with personal letters from Tony Blair tailored to their category. Every month, the information from each constituency was sent in to the Millbank databank. And the efforts to switch the switchers were kept up right to the end, with spare Millbank staff telephoning them during the last few days.

In January, the strategy moved on to GOTV – Get Out The Vote. More letters were sent out to each type of target voter and young people were sent a "hip" video of Tony Blair showing them how to vote. Candidates were required to contact personally at least 1,000 switchers. Canvassers were asked to send back issues of concern raised by the voters, which, together with information from the focus groups run by Philip Gould, the party's advertising guru, were used to inform future campaigns.

Labour, then, were on plan from 17 March, the day that John Major announced the general election date instituting the longest election campaign anyone could remember. True, though the Labour strategists had always expected a 1 May election they did not predict a six-week campaign. Their War Book – leaked towards the end of the campaign by rattled Tories who had got hold of a copy six months earlier – showed the meticulous plan for the campaign only covered four weeks. But Labour had the back-up to hastily add to it.

Supported by the Liberal Democrats, the Labour leadership began by putting pressure on the Government to publish the *Downey report* on cash-for-questions before Parliament prorogued. They succeeded in making sleaze the first issue of the campaign.

The Tories were on the back foot from the outset and were unable to recover. Labour was able to exploit a succession of events involving prominent Conservatives to keep the issue before the public in those first days: Allan Stewart, the former Scottish office minister, stood down after newspaper reports of an improper association with a married mother of four he met in an alcohol addiction clinic; the backbencher Piers Merchant was accused by another newspaper of having had an affair with a 17-year-old nightclub hostess; and the party's Scottish chairman Sir Michael Hirst quit over reports which claimed he once had a gay lover.

But the damaging sleaze was financial. Tim Smith, the former Northern Ireland Minister, who admitted receiving cash from Mohamed Al Fayed, quit as candidate for Beaconsfield. By contrast Neil Hamilton, the Tory at the heart of the cash-for-questions storm, continued to protest his innocence and refused to stand down prompting Martin Bell, the BBC war reporter, to stand against him as an anti-corruption candidate. The voters delivered a crushing defeat on Hamilton.

Amid all this the Conservatives were unable to gain any momentum. When Labour wobbled badly on the unions, when Blair made his embarrassing "parish council" slip over the issue of Scottish devolution, and when Gordon Brown did his U-turn on privatising air traffic control to cover an apparent hole in Labour's tax plans, the

Government was unable to sustain the attack.

It was the only time in the campaign that Labour became unnerved. Momentarily one section of the party – Gordon Brown's office – was briefing against the accepted line. But the Tories could not press their advantage. Indeed sleaze went on so long that Labour began to be nervous about it, and were anxious to move the agenda on.

Tory strategists at Smith Square hoped to find solace in the gaffes they were convinced Labour would make during the long campaign. But Labour were prepared for that. Blair was tense at the start of the campaign, an aide later admitted, because he knew all eyes would be on him: the Tories would attack him. Labour would present him as its greatest asset. "When you realise that the entire election is about you, you would have to be inhuman not to feel tense," the aide said. "It would mean a lot of changes for him and Cherie and the children, and he wants to protect the children."

Despite all that Blair's guard slipped hardly at all. Nor did his deputy's. Labour were aware that Smith Square had put a gaffe unit on John Prescott, following him round to highlight any mistakes, "but they gave up and went home after two or three weeks," said one Labour insider, "because he was so good".

Tight control characterised Tony Blair's relentless tour of the country

Tight control was the secret. It characterised Tony Blair's relentless tour of the country in which he visited 74 places in 60 constituencies during 34 days of campaigning, covering 9,168 miles by road, rail and air (the later in a chartered BAC 1-11 which became known as Blairforce One, and, at times, fleets of up to 11 helicopters for the Labour leader and his media entourage). In Northampton market square, where he began, he emerged from the dark-windowed bus to his People's Platform and shouted: "Hello Northampton! The sun's out... and in a few weeks, with your help, the Tories'll be out too!". It was a performance the reporters imprinted in his entourage were to witness on dozens of occasions in dozens of locations – local reference – joke – soundbite – and away. But Blair's minders ensured that the journalists had virtually no access to the Labour

leader; he spoke to the press on only three occasions, once at a drinks party and twice aboard Blairforce One, but he never seemed comfortable.

Labour's strategists preferred the press to concentrate on the photo-opportunities. The Tories followed suit, to the extent that the launch of the manifestos of the three main parties was overshadowed by shenanigans with activists dressed up as chickens – headless and otherwise (following the Tory accusation in week two that Blair was "chicken" after Labour pulled the plug on talks over a possible television debate between the two party leaders).

Meanwhile John Major was working hard too. He travelled 16,000 miles across Britain (including seven set-piece rallies in the Albert Hall, Plymouth, the ICB plant in Staffordshire, York, Manchester, Aberdeen and London Arena), dropping in to see the postponed Grand National at Aintree after a mad day cross-countrying England in helicopters, and visits to countless marginal seats. His tour seemed to prove that everywhere he went that he was more popular than his party. There were gaffes – the visit to the racing car with no wheels, and stepping into a shop called Steels – but throughout, he never flagged in his smiling, polite campaign to persuade the voters not to turn their backs on 18 years of Tory rule, in spite of the polls. Each day, the Major battlebus was sent out with the message "Britain is Booming – Don't Let Labour Blow It". It was the only clear slogan of the Tory campaign.

While Major was out on the hustings, Tory Central Office was the scene of squabbles between Maurice Saatchi and the party chairman Brian Mawhinney over the advertising campaign. Lord Saatchi wanted to attack Blair directly, depicting a grin with the question "What lies behind the smile?", but Major would not sanction it. Other advertisements were unconvincing: a lion symbol attacking Labour over Europe was quickly dropped; the "Tony and Bill" campaign – an attempt by Mawhinney to focus on the cost of Labour pledges – looked like a Labour poster, and was ditched.

By contrast things were going according to the meticulous plan at Millbank. With Blair out on the road, the Labour campaign was being run by Gordon Brown and Peter Mandelson. Each day there were three meetings – at 7am, 11am and 3.30pm. They were attended by

Mandelson, Alastair Campbell and Blair's chief of staff Jonathan Powell. Also there were David Hill, the chief media spokesman and Adrian McMenamin, the head of attack and rebuttal. No longer were shadow cabinet members to be allowed to spin their own yarns away from the web of Millbank Tower. Internet, faxes and pagers kept politicians in the field in touch with the ops room with its massive computer system, Excalibur, which can instantly turn up the most obscure information imaginable on rivals. Briefings were sent nightly, sometimes twice a day, ensuring that everybody was "on message". The messages were simple – small promises, on class sizes, jobs, the health service and crime, dressed up as big ideas.

It was from Millbank that the decision

Continued on page 18

'The sea wall is collapsing all around us tonight'

Peter Popham followed the minute-by-minute disintegration of the Tory party with the audience at Central Office. As the vote collapsed remorselessly through the night, it was a grim occasion indeed

With hindsight, it was all over before it started. The huge, brutally functional media room in Tory headquarters at Smith Square had been stripped for action, all the seating torn out, the lights and cameras of half a dozen mini television studios in place. Journalists milled about from sausages to wine to mineral water, and from television screen to television screen, in thrall to the Dimblebys like the rest of the country.

Then soon after 11, with only two results in, Hezza was among us, face drawn, virile eyebrows sagging tragically, full as ever of advertisements for his own unwavering loyalty, and initially tiptoeing round the dreadful reality beginning to happen. "I am possibly disappointed with the early indications". But then, on his third television interview, he decided to confront it head on. "We have to regroup, and regrouping is simply what you do when you find yourself on the wrong end of an election defeat..."

Paraphrasing, he added: "if that's what it is." But the cat was out of the bag, the D-word was on the loose.

But there is still a difference between the awful apprehension of imminent disaster, and the experience of that disaster occurring minute by minute, result by result. It's a difference measured in psychic pain. As journalists posted in party headquarters, we found ourselves in a rather horrible position. For anyone remotely sympathetic to political change, exhilaration mounted giddily through the small hours. And meanwhile we became onlookers to a wake, witnesses to a kill. Thirty-six Smith Square became a hospital: at 1.30 someone burst in and blurted "the word from upstairs is that Portillo's in serious trouble", and it sounded like the life blood was draining away. Then it changed from a hospital to a morgue, and from a morgue to a monument.

It became the monument to an age swept away with the sort of remorseless vigour - remember the fall of the Berlin Wall - that seems to be the special feature of great political events at the end of the 20th century.

In parallel, the Tories themselves were transformed overnight. At 11pm, Hezza knew what was happening, but for us and the world beyond he was still a big beast of the jungle, a towering figure in the "natural party of government": the party which, under Thatcher, had apparently transcended its class lim-

itations. As the hours ticked by and the losses poured in, all that was blown away. At 1.10, Jeremy Paxman said to Cecil Parkinson: "This is about as bad as it can get, isn't it?" and Parkinson gamely replied: "I'm glad we've won a seat!" The party shrivelled before our eyes like a balloon.

The "naturalness" of the Tories' hegemony was exposed as a fairy tale. And the distinctive fact about the Tories, which for those of us who tramped around in Major's wake during the campaign became impossible to ignore, the fact that it is, at bottom, a peculiar and distinctive caste in British society, became more and more stark.

We saw them for what they are: the chinless wonders, the very nice pinstripe suits, the year-round tans; their hereditary assumption of privilege, their camp obsession with gentility - manifested as much in the painful pedantries of John Major's

said. The only consolation for the top Tories trapped in our midst was a little grim humour. "Are you going to stay on as Welsh secretary?" some airhead radio interviewer demanded of William Hague. "I don't think I'll be able to stay on as Welsh secretary if there is a change of government," he replied with the most spectral of smiles.

As the main story surged on, Labour gain after Labour gain flashing up, this election's irresistible sidesteps played themselves out. At 1.18 at Wandsworth Town Hall, David Mellor conceded Putney, and was rewarded for the good grace with which he accepted it by a shocking display of bad manners from James Goldsmith, who heckled and slow-handclapped from the sidelines.

"Putney said 'Up your hacienda, Jimmy,'" Mellor commented shortly afterwards. The preposterousness of the idea that we might have vested our patriotic emotion in a figure such as Goldsmith was violently borne home.

Mellor himself summoned the most vivid imagery of the night to describe what was happening when he said, "A tidal wave has burst over the Conservative Party tonight, and it's not a matter of putting your finger in the dike. The sea wall is collapsing all around us."

The other result which punctuated the night with special emotion came at 2.45 from Tatton, when Martin Bell's staggering 11,000 majority was announced. It was greeted by Bell with his trademark stoicism, but also with a new-found assurance. "We are the people of England, and we have not spoken yet," he said, quoting Chesterton, but pointing out that this was no longer true. The people of England had spoken.

For Tories, the cruellest hours of the night were between 12.30 and 3, as amazing Home Counties losses to both Labour and the Liberal Democrats ("Gillingham!" exclaimed the *Daily Express* reporter unbelievably) thudded home one after another, and as one giant of the age after another toppled into the dust.

At 2.59 it was announced that Mrs Thatcher's old constituency of Finchley had gone to Labour with a 15 per cent swing, and in some of the Tories present, something snapped.

A prominent year-round-tan pinstriped functionary said suddenly: "It's time for a change, you know. It's time for a change." At 3am lit-

speaking style as in the party volunteers picking their way daintily across Smith Square last night as a handful of hecklers roared at them. "Win one did yer? Goodbye!"

The incredible night took its shocking course. Gordon Brown was interviewed and cracked the most extraordinary smile - an expression no-one, except perhaps his mother, had ever imagined him capable of. Peter Mandelson pulled the same trick, straight out of some previously unsuspected locker known as his heart, and looked practically human. Only Tony Blair himself, Mr toothpaste smile, contrived to look as beamingly plastic as ever.

At 12.21 the Edgbaston result was declared, described as "the Basildon of the '97 election". Labour took it for the first time in history with a 10 per cent swing, and the adrenaline began to pound. After Edgbaston, at 12.48, came the real Basildon. Silence fell. Basildon had registered a 15 per cent swing to Labour. The vastness of what we were in the thick of began to sink in. "Christ!" said someone. Peter Snow's seat-indicating boards clattered over, row after row, changing from blue to red. "It's like being in the middle of a stock market crash," someone

'We saw them for what they are: chinless wonders, pinstripe suits, the all-year tans'



An eye to the future: Norma Major at the Conservatives' Huntingdon election headquarters yesterday morning after her husband had publicly thanked her for her support
Photograph: Tom Pilston

tle Stephen Twigg bounced Michael Portillo out, and it was all getting beyond a joke. The news, a moment or two later, that the Conservatives had held on to Bognor Regis and Littlehampton was a timely reassurance that the world would not be entirely unrecognisable in the morning.

So it went on, and the natural party of government shrivelled away, the giant shrunk before our eyes, the comfortable, self-serving caste stood exposed in all its shame and pain and embarrassment. Tories were, however, bred for occasions like this, and

at 3.40 Viscount Cranborne, small muscles in his cheek twitching from time to time, and looking as if he had been through a mincer, gave a textbook demonstration of stiff upper lip.

Yes, he confirmed. "It has been the worst night in my extremely short and undistinguished career in politics... the party is in a state of fairly severe catatonic shock." [Note and relish that "fairly".] "It would only be polite to let John Major decide what to do in his own time."

Five am; outside in the square it was first light, and as a small but vo-

ciferous band of hecklers across the road - actually one heckler with a chorus of supportive laughers - gave tongue, fairly catatonic and devastated men in suits huddled and rubbed their hands and blew out their cheeks at the entrance of party headquarters.

The night was done and it was all over. At 5.27, without warning and at some speed, the Prime Minister's Jaguar swept into the forecourt and Norma and John got out and smiled their Tory smiles, and disappeared into the building. The end was high.

'In the long term he was afraid that he would be put down as a loser'



Celebrating victory: John Prescott's battle bus is greeted at dawn by jubilant supporters outside the Royal Festival Hall, in London, yesterday
Photograph: Brian Harris

Continued from page 17

came - after Blair was accused of being dull - to raise the stakes. Next morning Campbell gathered the media in a conference suite in Stevenage to tell them about a change in tactics. The press had, he said, been too boring in its coverage of the campaign, so from the next day Tony was going to be passionate. It was planned, he announced without conscious irony, that henceforth he would break out into spontaneity.

It was more spontaneous even than planned. Blair's microphone broke and he was forced to shout, to pace the stage and to use all his energy to get his message across. The reaction was extremely positive and resulted in his personal ratings going up overnight in Scotland.

What Labour could never have planned for was the Conservatives' determination to snooker themselves on the question of Europe. At the beginning of week five the Home Office minister David Maclean became the most senior government figure to join the ranks of ministers junior ministers and well over 100 other candidates speaking out against a single currency. The continual sniping from his own candidates was damaging to John Major's authority throughout the campaign and eventually forced him into addressing the subject head on. It was a mistake. Labour strategists said privately "because it brought out John Major's weak leadership". Their internal divisions on Europe also meant that the Tories were forced to keep their best hitter - Kenneth Clarke - away from the centre of the political stage.

"There was absolutely no way they were going to hold it together over Europe for six weeks," a senior Labour source said. "They should have been on the economy the whole time but they couldn't because they were worried about Ken Clarke [and his support for a single currency]. That was crazy because he is by far their best performer and their most popular politician. It is a measure of the division within the Tory party that they couldn't use their best advantage and their best player."

If it was Europe which lost it for the

stituencies, the Liberal Democrat leader conducted a campaign which gave the lie to the old "woolly Liberal" image. First, it was targeted ruthlessly on winnable seats and constituencies where the party hoped to build up a strong presence based on their incumbency at local authority level. But strikingly Ashdown kept hammering home his key theme that the electorate would have to pay more tax if they wanted to see an improvement in education and health; his insistence that "you can't get something for nothing" seemed to strike a chord with voters.

Consistently Tory strategy seemed to backfire. Their poster depicting Tony Blair as a tiny ventriloquist's dummy sitting on the knee of Helmut Kohl was brushed aside by

Labour as a sign of "panic and desperation". And Lord Saatchi grew increasingly frustrated as the Prime Minister insisted that three planned party election broadcasts be dropped so that he could attack the spectre of Labour embracing European federalism.

It was the same with the row over pensions. When Tony Blair claimed the Tories planned to abolish the state pension, John Major fumed that it was untrue, said Labour had got into the gutter and came close to calling Blair a liar - but all he did was invite the judgement from many that it was the Tories who could not be believed. Whatever, like Brian Mawhinney's precipitous embrace of the diversion of whether the journalist Will Self had taken heroin on

'The Tories should have been on the economy but they were worried about Ken Clarke'

Major's campaign jet, it all only succeeded in preventing the Tories from regaining the momentum. They never returned to the effective attack on tax which in the final week, Central Office had briefed journalists to expect. The sense that the Tories were falling apart was dramatically underscored by Edwina Currie predicting a Labour landslide in a newspaper article and announcing it would be a "miracle" if she could hold her own Derbyshire South seat - as, in the event, she did not.

Towards the end of the gruelling six weeks John Major was sitting in the VIP section of the Prime Minister's campaign jet, flying back late at night from one of his election rallies. In the darkness he turned towards a Tory aide and asked her: "If the worst happens, and we are defeated, what will they say about the campaign in the long term?"

"They will say you fought the best campaign. They won't blame you."

"Look me in the eyes and say that," he said.

In the short term, he knew he would get the blame - for not fighting on a Euro-sceptic ticket, for fighting on a One-Nation ticket, for refusing to allow Michael Howard to make immigration an election issue, for keeping open the option on a single currency. He could live with that.

But in the long term, he was worried he would go down in history as the loser, not the man who against the odds had held the party together for so long. In the end, however, the seismic fault lines within the Conservative Party proved too deep and wide for one man to hold together.

صكنا من الاصل

Interest rates set to rise ahead of July Budget

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Reduce unemployment, reverse inequality, reshape the welfare state, raise long-term growth - these are the new Government's economic ambitions.

Gordon Brown's most pressing decision will be less lofty, however. Unless there is a postponement, he is due to meet Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, on Wednesday to decide whether to put up interest rates.

Mr George will recommend a small increase. Not only does he still think the economy needs cooling, but the Bank could scarcely reverse its advice after clashing with Kenneth Clarke for the past six months. If the Chancellor does not want to alarm the financial markets straight away, he will heed the advice.

After that, the meetings will change form. In a bid to avoid raising the curtain on a "Gordon and Eddie show", Mr Brown has said he will appoint a monetary policy committee at the Bank of England to take the personality out of the monthly discussion. He will also appoint a new Council of Economic Advisers at the Treasury.

Mr Brown has promised a Budget within two months, and 1 July is the likely date. It will definitely do two things: introduce the windfall tax on privatised utilities, and reduce VAT on domestic energy to 5 per cent. Concern about the threat of legal challenges means there will be a few weeks of sensitive discussions about which companies will be liable for how much.

The additional revenue raised by the windfall levy is earmarked for measures to get the young and long-term unemployed into jobs. The bare bones were sketched out in the manifesto. Anybody under 25 is meant to face a choice between a subsidised job, a voluntary sector or community job and full-time education - the unemployment option is being closed. The plans could be implemented later this year, although it is impossible to be sure how quickly they might deliver the desired result.

There is speculation in the City that the Government will take advantage of its landslide to raise extra taxes in the Budget. The fact that many experts would recommend increasing taxes rather than interest rates would help justify it.

Companies would probably be the target for any rise in tax. But many economists expect this in a later Budget as part of a full-scale reform of company taxation to encourage investment.

As Labour has pledged to stick to the existing departmental spending plans this year and next, Mr Brown can avoid the traditional bruising round of negotiations. There will be nearly 18 months to debate the reshaping of public expenditure.

Mr Brown's advisers have signalled a wish to move the Budget back to March, but experts think it might be necessary to have one this November too. The long gap between tax changes in November 1996 and March 1998 would leave too much opportunity for tax avoidance schemes to emerge.

Although there is no chance that the personal tax burden as a whole will be increased, there is a possibility of shifting it. The landslide could make Gordon Brown bolder about introducing a 10p starting rate of income tax for the low-paid, financed by reduced allowances for the better off.

The other big issue demanding immediate attention will be European monetary union. There is barely enough time for an eager government to make the first wave in 1999, so nobody expects this administration to make the dash.

But the question of Britain's later plans will come up at the Inter-Governmental Conference in mid-June. The start of preparations in July for the British presidency of the EU in the first half of next year means that the UK, one of the few countries staying out, will play a crucial part in judging which of the others can join.

There will also be early announcements about plans to sign up to the social chapter and about setting up a commission on the promised minimum wage.



'Independent' journalists look at the priority areas that Tony Blair's team will have to tackle as the cheers fade and they get down to the business of running the country

The challenges facing Britain's new Labour government

IRA dangles prospect of ceasefire

David McKittrick
Ireland correspondent

In Northern Ireland Labour will continue to face the usual strands of the Irish question, but in the immediate aftermath of the election one issue will eclipse all others: whether or not a genuine peace process can be reconstructed.

This means a major feature of the next few weeks may be a process of exploration as the government on the one hand, and Sinn Féin and the IRA on the other, size each other up and decide whether business can be done together.

The central question is whether a second IRA cessation of violence might be in the offing. Labour's position, in common with that of the Conservatives, has been that ministers will not talk to Sinn Féin until an IRA ceasefire is in place.

The primary republican precondition for a new ceasefire is a cast-iron, publicly announced, government assurance that such a move would guarantee Sinn

Fein entry into the adjourned multi-party talks. Clearly, to fulfil this would entail some element of communication between the Government and the republicans.

The political talks are due to resume on 3 June. During the election campaign, Dr Mo Mowlam, as shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, made an overture to republicans with a public suggestion that an immediate cessation at that point might lead to an entry into talks in June.

For their part, republican sources say they do not regard 3 June as an important deadline, and do not expect any agreement to have been reached by then. It was, in any event, made clear by Labour, as IRA disruption tactics continued in Britain during the campaign, that the specific offer ought to be regarded as null and void.

But the fact it was made appears to suggest that in office Labour would actively pursue a similar course. This would dovetail, in principle at least, with

Sinn Féin's expectations: Martin McGuinness has repeatedly said he expects another peace process following the same template as the last.

However, while the approaches may be similar in principle, the particulars involved are not only vital but highly problematical. They include questions such as arms de-commissioning and how any new cessation could be verified as genuine. The magnitude of these difficulties suggests they will take time to overcome.

Apart from the problems themselves, a number of potentially disruptive, or at least distracting events lie ahead in the immediate calendar.

For one thing, another election looms in Northern Ireland with all of its 26 local councils to be re-elected on 21 March. A general election is also in the offing in the Irish Republic, with polling likely to take place in next month.

And while Labour explores the possibility of bringing about a new IRA ceasefire, it cannot afford to ignore the question of

its relationship with the Protestant and Unionist community. Over the past year the pivotal parliamentary position of David Trimble's Ulster Unionist Party led to a series of concessions from John Major.

Unionism will have to come to terms with the fact that Labour's huge majority has led to the loss of this influence.

The wild card in all this, however, is Drumcree, which is shorthand for the loyalist marching season in general and in particular the controversial march due to take place at Portadown, Co-Armagh, early in July. The Unionist community is clearly torn as to whether pressing its right to march should take precedence over its fears about another summer of widespread disruption.

In a nutshell, therefore, the challenge for Labour will be to attempt to arrange another IRA ceasefire, but to do so without dramatically increasing the fears and insecurities of the Unionists, which would make marching confrontations much more likely.

European clock is ticking away at double time

Sarah Helm
Brussels

Europe has been waiting patiently for Tony Blair. But now that the new Prime Minister is in office, he will find that the European clock is ticking to a breathtakingly fast timetable.

Mr Blair has no time at all in which to set out his strategy on European reform, and economic and monetary union.

A meeting on European Union reform in Brussels next Monday will be the first attended by a minister from the new Government. The first meeting of European finance ministers comes the following week.

On 23 May Mr Blair will take part in a European summit of heads of government in the Netherlands. And on 17 June the Government must be ready to sign a new treaty on European reform at Amsterdam. Within the next six months Mr Blair must decide whether to take Britain into the single currency at the start on 1 January 1999.

The country is about to discover that there is no longer any time to "wait and see" on membership of the single currency. Under the terms of the Maastricht treaty, Britain must "notify" its European partners on whether it wants to be a member of the first wave of single-currency countries by the end of this year. Decisions on which countries can qualify to join will be taken by EU heads of government in early May next year. Mr Blair will, therefore, be under pressure to decide, probably by the early autumn, whether to call for a referendum on the issue, or decide to keep Britain out until a later stage.

While all these questions demand early decision, the Government must also start preparing immediately to take over the presidency of the EU, which Britain takes up for six months on 1 January next year.

Meetings with senior European leaders, including Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, and Wim Kok, the Dutch Prime Minister, were already being scheduled yesterday for the next two weeks.

At Monday's Brussels meeting the Government will be expected to outline its position in the Amsterdam Treaty talks. Decisions on all major European reform issues have been on hold in Brussels, largely due to the uncertainty caused by the British election. But now the EU has less than six weeks to hammer out a compromise text.

In consultation with Robin Cook, the new Foreign Secretary, Mr Blair is to appoint a Foreign Office minister of state for Europe. Peter Mandelson, Mr Blair's election campaign manager, was said to be tipped for the job. Whoever takes this hot seat will no doubt spend the weekend in briefings with Foreign Office officials on some of the most complex issues facing Europe today. Also in Brussels on Monday will be Stephen Wall, Britain's permanent representative to the EU, and the man who has presented the Tory government's case in Brussels for nearly 18 months.

The British minister will face the severe challenge of demonstrating to other European leaders that Mr Blair's Government is, as it has declared, more positive towards Europe, without being seen to cave in to integrationist demands.

Among Britain's partners there will be great hopes that the new Government will on Monday set about swiftly unblocking numerous policy logjams on restructuring, caused by John Major's Government's opposition to any further integration.

Mr Blair's stand on such crucial questions as reducing the use of the veto, creating more power for the European Parliament and building a European policy on defence will be explored. His refusal to sign up to any new integration powers in areas such as justice, immigration and defence will be tested and his commitment to signing up to the Social Chapter will also be explored.

Over the next few weeks numerous European Councils will take place in Brussels at which other new ministers will have their first chance to exercise power on the European stage.

Cross-party alliance a threat to devolution

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Only a handful of Tony Blair's Cabinet were in the Labour Government which lost power in 1979, but the devolution battle which proved its final downfall will be scorching deep into the minds of the new Government of 1997.

With some MPs on both sides of the house opposed to Labour's plans for Scottish and Welsh assemblies, Britain's new Prime Minister will be very much aware that the issue will be one of the most difficult with which he will have to deal.

The last time Labour proposed devolution north of the border, the bill ate up nearly one-third of a legislative year, ending in a vote of no confidence. This is why, in the face of strong opposition in Scotland, Mr Blair decided last year that he would hold a referendum on the issue.

Although Labour and the Liberal Democrats have agreed to co-operate in introducing legislation as soon as possible, they will face opposition from a small handful of their own MPs - including Tam Dalyell, the Labour member for Linlithgow and the inventor of the notorious "West Lothian question". (Mr Dalyell repeatedly asked during the Seventies why Scottish assembly members from West Lothian should be able to vote on English affairs in Westminster when Westminster MPs could not vote on West Lothian affairs in Scotland.) Others, including one of Labour's campaign managers, Brian Wilson, have anti-devolution pasts.

There are also signs that some Welsh Labour MPs, including Denzil Davies, former Treasury minister and MP for Llanelli in Dyfed, and Ray Powell, member for Ogmore in Mid Glamorgan, have doubts about some aspects of the policy, particularly the plans for the assemblies to be elected through proportional representation (PR).

Mr Blair has already run into trouble twice over his plans for Scottish devolution - once last year, over the assembly's tax-raising powers, and more recently during the general election campaign. The Labour leader was heavily criticised after he said in a newspaper interview that a Scottish assembly would be similar in some respects to an English parish council. He has maintained that sovereignty rests with Westminster, to the fury of many Scots who believe that it rests with the voters.

Mr Blair is well aware that he needs a big hitter in charge of his plans, and it is assumed that he will put his chief whip, Donald Dewar, in charge. However, alternative rumours put Mr Dewar either at the Scottish Office or the job of Leader of the House, where he could oversee all Labour's constitutional reforms.

The other constitutional issue that will exercise Mr Blair's strategists over the next few weeks is the promise of a referendum on the voting system for the House of Commons. However, with such a large majority he does not have to keep the Liberal Democrat Party happy - this is the big issue on which they would have demanded concessions in a hung Parliament, and Mr Blair has already said he is "not persuaded" of the case for proportional representation.

His first act on this issue will be to set up a commission which will recommend a proportional alternative to the present first-past-the-post system. However, the timetable would be tight even if Mr Blair was fully committed to introducing the change before the next election.

Labour's manifesto contained a large section on "cleaning up politics", and there are a number of other measures to which the Government is committed.

A Freedom of Information Act and a Bill of Rights are promised, probably in the first Queen's Speech this month. These will incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into law in the United Kingdom as "a floor, not a ceiling". The Freedom of Information Act will be accompanied by "more open government", and an independent national statistical service.

Schools top hit list with move to cut class sizes

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Education will be the subject of one of the first bills of the new Parliament to fulfil Tony Blair's promise that his priorities are education, education and education.

The bill will include the abolition of the assisted places scheme to pay for smaller classes for five-to-seven-year-olds, the ending of grant maintained status for schools which have opted out of local authority control and, possibly, stronger powers for the Secretary of State for Education to close failing schools.

Labour's pledge on class sizes will be the most tricky to implement. Since money from the assisted places scheme will not be released until next year because pupils who have been offered places for this autumn will continue to be funded, no start can be made on reducing class sizes until next April at the earliest.

There will be no law which says class sizes for young children cannot be more than 30. Instead, local authorities will be invited to produce plans for lowering class sizes and will bid for special grants to implement them.

There are two difficulties with this. The first is that it will only enable local authorities to give schools the money to reduce class sizes; it will not compel them to do so.

The second is that the whole basis of the way in which schools are funded will have to be changed if the maximum savings are to be realised from the assisted places scheme.

At present, schools receive a specific amount for each pupil, depending on their age. If they continue to do this, the only savings will be the comparatively small difference between the cost of an assisted place at an independent school and the cost of a state school place.

However, if the rules were changed to allow, for instance, authorities to fund schools according to the number of classes, rather than the precise number of pupils, the savings would be much greater.

The whole issue of who policies class sizes will also have to be tackled.

Some changes to grant maintained schools will not require legislation. Labour's promise to fund them in the same way as other schools so that they lose their financial advantages will probably be carried out at once by scrapping the separate funding formula for opted out schools.

The money they receive for services they pay for which would normally be provided by the local authority will also be reduced.

Their change of status - Labour is offering them the opportunity to become "foundation" schools - would need to be part of a bill. They will have to have local authority governors and agree their admissions policies with the local authority.

Independent appeal panels who would sort out disputes between the two sides would be included in the bill. The big questions are over their assets which they took with them when they opted out and their control of admissions.

The official Labour line is that there will be few disputes over admissions policies but local authorities expect a series of battles.

For them and for parents, the key issue will be whether former grant maintained schools will still be able to continue to operate admissions policies which enable them to select the children they want while neighbouring schools continue to take the pupils who live closest to them.

Labour will not need to legislate to scrap the nursery voucher scheme which it has promised to end by September. The legislation which introduced nursery vouchers for all four-year-olds simply enabled the secretary of state to provide vouchers.

The new government will, however, need to unscramble the funds which are being distributed as vouchers to parents and redistribute them to local authorities. Civil servants believe these could be unpicked according to the promised timetable.

jailed
win
ward

THE NEW POLITICAL MAP OF BRITAIN

The state of the constituencies before Thursday's landslide



GRAPHIC: Kristina Ferris & Jim Pavlidis

هكذا من الأصل

THE INDEPENDENT
election '97

[illegible]

هكذا من الإصا

هَبْنَا مِنَ الْاَهْلِ

MILTON KEYNES NORTH EAST

LAS GARRI FROM C
2 Boundary change

Election 70,000, Turnout 51.26% (27.8%)

Conservative (C)	29,291	(42.4%)
* Peter Burt (L)	22,593	(32.5%)
Labour (Lab)	16,967	(24.3%)
Michael Phillips (P)	1,482	(2.1%)
John Francis (Soc)	516	(0.7%)
Maurice Jones (NP)	59	(0.0%)

LAS Reg 260
1992: C reg 14,175 (27.9%)

MILTON KEYNES SOUTH WEST

LAS GARRI FROM C
Election 71,070, Turnout 50.79% (27.4%)

Physicist Stanley (L)	27,238	(38.3%)
* Peter Jones (C)	22,728	(32.1%)
Peter Jones (L)	10,655	(15.1%)
Hugh Kelly (NP)	3,093	(4.4%)
LAS Reg 102,626	14,725	electing 6 to LAS

1992: C reg 4,507 (4.16%)

MITCHAM & MORDEN

LAS GARRI FROM C
Election 65,000, Turnout 50.2% (29.4%)

Sheldahl (Mississippi) (Lab.)	27,954 (53.2%)
Clinton (Mississippi) (Lab.)	14,243 (29.1%)
White House (Lab.)	2,276 (4.3%)
Pearl Harbor (Lab.)	810 (1.5%)
Lynxville Mall (GHP)	521 (1.0%)
Jim Walters (Lynch)	415 (0.8%)
Washington (Lab.)	114 (0.2%)
John Barrett (OK Ind.)	112 (0.2%)
Nigel Denver (ACC)	50 (0.1%)
Lab Totals 13,761	16.8% missing in G Lab
1992 - 93 year 1,924 (3.3%)	

MOLE VALLEY

● boundary
○ household

Household change

Electoral 63-140, Tenuous 54,524 (75.3%)	14,814 (48.8%)
State - Corcoran (P)	11,757 (72.5%)
State - Corcoran (P)	11,757 (72.5%)
Chapman (Payne) (Lab.)	2,824 (14.7%)
Nichols (Tate) (Lab.)	2,424 (14.7%)
Robert (Payne) (Lab.)	1,577 (8.0%)
Jon Cameron (UK Ind.)	403 (2.5%)
Jonny (Tate)	197 (1.2%)
G Miss 19,222	
1992 - 93 year 18,827 (27.7%)	

MOLE VALLEY

LAD GAIN FROM 1992		
Electron 50.73%	Turnon 31.92%	(50.79%)
New Electronic (Lad)	23.04%	(47.74%) (+8.57%)
Fluor Energy (Lad)	19.26%	(38.53%) (+8.57%)
Mon. Veltres (Lad)	4.54%	(9.08%) (+8.57%)
Wall Water (Pac)	1.19%	(2.37%) (+8.57%)
Atk County (Pac)	1.51%	(3.02%) (+8.57%)
Lad Laid 5.36%	7.81%	ending C to L
1992 C Laid 6.29%		

MONTGOMERYSHIRE

LD HOLD

Electron 42.81%	Turnon 31.92%	(74.74%)
Liquid Limit (Lad)	14.84%	(18.68%) -2.84%
Mon. Veltres (Lad)	4.54%	(9.08%) (+8.57%)
Angford Waters (Lad)	6.10%	(19.14%)
Helen Mary Jones (Pac)	1.60%	(4.84%)
John Burton (Pac)	0.95%	(2.79%)
Lad Water (Lad)	3.30%	(9.64%)
Laid Laid 5.36%	1.99%	ending C to L
1992 L Laid 5.26%	(5.78%)	

MORAY

SPR HOLD

Boundary changes		
Reclaim 56.36%	Turnon 31.92%	(61.27%)
*Marginal Estate (Lad)	18.21%	(61.27%)

[illegible]

Pat Sammon (Polsky)	1:48 (8.3%)
Lab Mfg 14,758	
1982 Lab mfg 6,260 (42.5%)	
MOTHERWELL & WISHAW	
LBS SOLD	
Elevenhead 52,252	Turnout 36,619 (70.06%)
Frank Ray (Lab)	2,120 (57.4%)
James Middleton (GNP)	2,080 (57.6%)
Scott Decker (Lab)	1,000 (27.8%)
Ala. Mackey (L)	2,351 (65.3%)
Christopher Hemm (State Lab)	767 (21.2%)
Lab Mfg 12,791	
1982 Lab mfg 14,080 (85.1%)	
NEATH	
LBS SOLD	
Elevenhead 55,525	Turnout 41,543 (74.82%)
"Pulse" Ray (Lab)	3,364 (8.1%)
Lab Mfg 26,741	
Decker (Lab)	3,593 (8.6%)
Taylor Jones (P)	3,244 (8.1%)
Frank Lyle (Lab)	2,959 (7.3%)
Peter Moulden (Lab)	375 (0.9%)
Elevenhead Mfg (L)	420 (1.0%)
Lab Mfg 26,741	6.65% selling to Lab

1992 Laid 10/23/93 (52.75%)	
NEW FOREST EAST	
C H/O/D	
Boundary Change	
Elizabeth	55.717, Turnout (33.99%)
Jeffrey Lane	21, 1,803 (58.00%)
George Dawson (LD)	15,630 (57.12%)
Alan Goodfellow (LD)	5,187 (23.23%)
C Haid	5,215
C Haid	103,949 (59.62%)
NEW FOREST WEST	
C H/O/D	
Boundary Change	
Elizabeth	65,522 Turnout 42.70 (34.79%)
Donnaud Berens (C)	25,146 (64.50%)
Robert Hite	33,617 (87.12%)
Dave Gault (LD)	7,552 (19.44%)
Michael Hines (UK Hld)	2,150 (5.44%)
C Haid	1,542 (3.93%)
C Haid	75,389 (92.17%)
NEWMARK	
LAD 64,541 (C)	
Elizabeth	68,763, Turnout 51.97 (74.59%)
Flora Jarne (LD)	23,695 (45.21%),

NEWCASTLE-LAND LYME	
Lyme Island	
Electorate 73,680, Turnout 56.47% (76.59%)	
*David (Liberal)	21,270 (27.74%)
*Paul (Labour)	3,107 (5.50%)
Test (Conservative)	892 (1.21%)
Richard (Socialist)	844 (1.15%)
Ray (Liberal)	302 (0.41%)
Kathryn (Labour)	174 (0.24%)
LD 106,517	
1992: 2-cmp 11.057 (18.76%)	
NEWCASTLE-LAND LYME	
Land Island	
Electorate 56,896, Turnout 49.12% (73.67%)	
*Lyle (Labour)	27,749 (48.77%) +4
Marianne Hayes (LD)	10,357 (18.39%)
John (Liberal)	6,359 (11.18%)
Kim (Socialist)	3,510 (6.17%)
Steve (Conservative)	1,289 (2.26%)
LD 44,192	
1992: 2-cmp 11.057 (18.76%)	

Highgate Hill (502 Loc)	1,262	0.26%	Walling Cn
West Hill (77,290)	1,262		
1992 Loc and 9,639 (16.39%)			
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE			
CENTRAL			
LAB HOLD			
Boundary change			
Electorate 60,781	Turnout 46,006	(67.09%)	
*Ann Coates (Lab)	27,272	44.88%	
John Gifford (Con)	18,710	30.63%	
Ruth Barry (Lib)	9,591	15.78%	
Charles Connors (P)	1,113	1.83%	
LAB Loc 16,400			
1992 Loc and 7,969 (14.14%)			
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE EAST			
WALL SEND			
LAB HOLD			
Boundary change			
Electorate 63,272	Turnout 41,599	(65.73%)	
*Mark Jones (Lab)	25,697	40.45%	
Henry Middleton (Con)	8,759	13.84%	
Gratham Morgan (Lib)	4,415	6.98%	
Paul Cresswell (P)	986	1.56%	
Peter Morgan (Lab)	1,412	2.23%	

	Martin Lavy (Conn 848)	163
	Lab Maj 29,311	
	1992: Lab maj 15,045 (54.9%)	
	NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NO	
	LAB HOLD	
(%)	Garrothe 65,367	Tarrant 45,229 (69.20%)
(%)	"Ding" Henderson (Lab)	29,125 (82.17%, +)
(%)	Gregory White (C)	8,768
(%)	Peter Allen (Lab)	8,578
	Darren Chisholm (Pse)	1,733
	Lab Maj 19,392	12.58% swing
	1992: Lab maj 9,946 (17.67%)	

the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are illiterate has increased from 1.2 billion to 1.5 billion. The number of illiterate people in the world is projected to reach 1.7 billion by the year 2015. The number of illiterate people in the world is projected to reach 1.7 billion by the year 2015.

Why pollsters can feel self-satisfied

John Rentoul

They told the pollsters they would and on Thursday they did, in their millions. The swing to Labour was huge, the equivalent of 3 million people changing sides since the last election, but it was concentrated where it could do the Conservatives most damage - in the Midlands, South and London and among the middle classes.

The Liberal Democrat vote was even more focused, so that Paddy Ashdown's party could take maximum advantage of the collapsing Tory vote, even though the Lib-Dem share of the total vote slipped slightly. And John Major suffered further from tactical voting, with voters backing whichever party was best placed to beat the Tory.

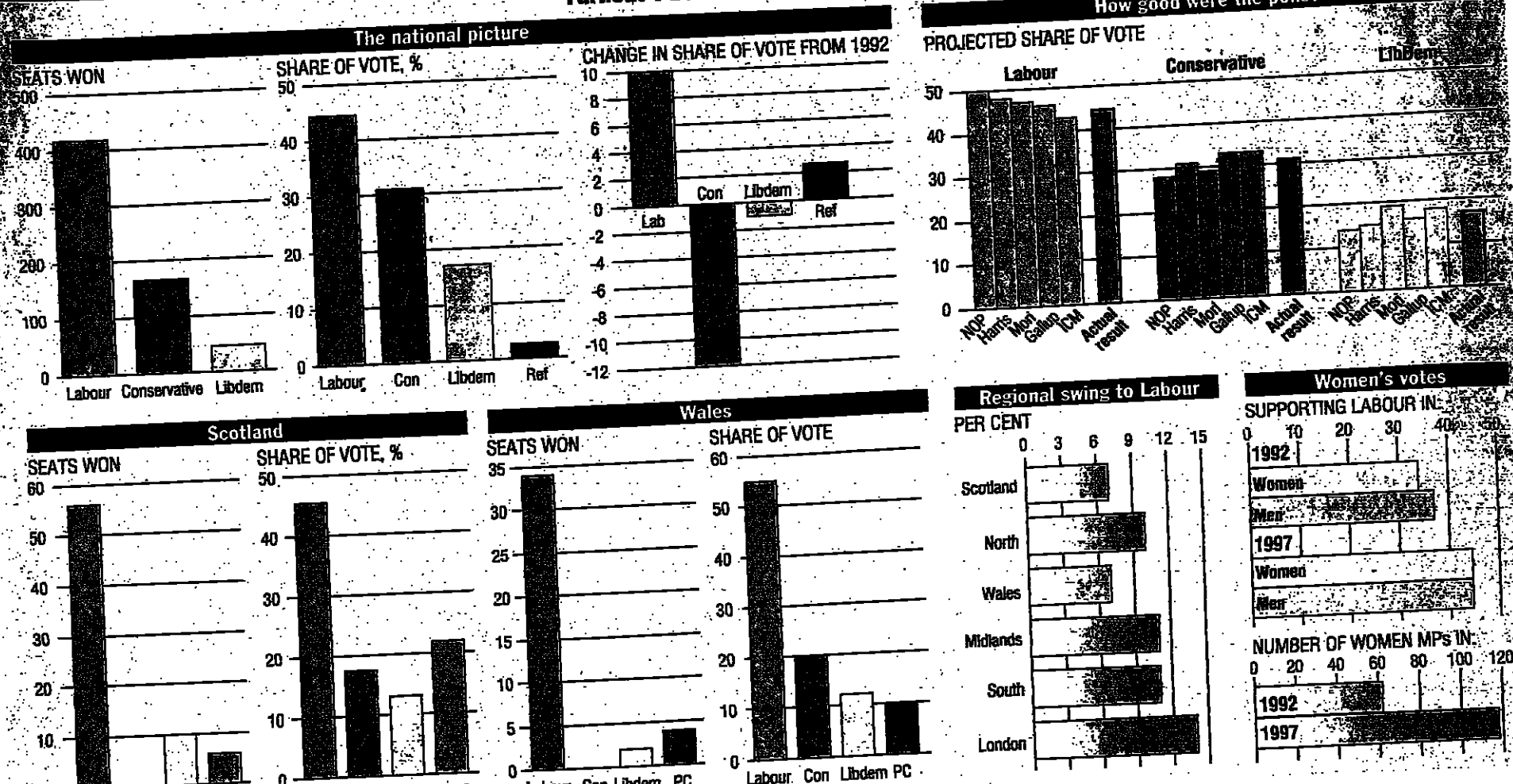
Polling companies will be congratulating themselves. Even Nick Sparrow of ICM, left slightly pink-cheeked by his poll last week putting the Labour lead at 5 percentage points, emerged with reputation enhanced. His final estimate of Labour's lead beat NOP and MORI. The bosses of the five main companies, as is their tradition, placed predictions in envelopes sealed before the polls closed. The forecast from Gallup's Bob Wybow was closest to the final outcome.

The average of the final polls put Labour 16 points ahead, implying a 12-point swing since the last election. ITN and BBC exit polls also pointed to a swing of 12 or 13 points. In the end the average swing was 10 points. But the swing to Labour in the middle classes was 12 points, and all Thursday night Labour posted higher swings in the Tory-held seats where it was challenging, while the swing in safe Labour working-class seats was often much lower.

In terms of Commons seats the Tories have done much worse than Michael Foot's Labour Party in 1983, after the SDP breakaway and Bennite civil war. Then, Labour were reduced to 209 seats. The Tory

How Britain voted - anatomy of a landslide

Turnout 71% down 7% on 1992.



share of the vote on Thursday was just above the 28 per cent recorded by Labour then but this time the Tories were caught in a pincer movement. Where in 1983 the Tories benefited from a divided opposition, now they are squeezed by both the

other parties. The geographical isolation of the Tories is more severe than Labour's 14 years ago. Then, Labour was driven back into its urban strongholds, mostly in the North, Wales and Scotland, but retained outposts in all

parts of the United Kingdom, except southern England outside London. Now the Tories have no seats in Scotland and Wales and none in any big city of England except the capital. In Birmingham they only have Sir Norman Fowler in Sutton

Coldfield, a distant, prosperous and fiercely independent satellite. In London they have 12 out of 72 seats. Combined with the fact that the Conservatives no longer control any councils in urban areas, they face a fundamental weakness, having be-

come the party not just of England but of suburban and rural England. On the other side of the Commons they will find a Labour Party so large there will not be room for all of them in the chamber at once and with

the party not just of England but of suburban and rural England. On the other side of the Commons they will find a Labour Party so large there will not be room for all of them in the chamber at once and with

a convincing claim to be a truly representative national party. Labour now draws its representation from all over the country, including many places in core Tory territory, such as Hove and St Albans.

One in five Labour MPs is a woman. In autumn 1996 Blair's advisers were sufficiently worried that he was putting off women voters to do something about it. He adopted a sharply different political style, visiting Great Ormond Street children's hospital with his wife, Cherie, and asking a question about NHS childbirth in the Commons. The shift came after party research indicated that older women in particular found him insincere and too smooth. This was the reality behind stories that Mr Blair had "flattened his hairstyle" to appeal to women. His hair seemed to stay the same but women no longer find Labour off-putting and there was no difference in the way men and women voted on Thursday, according to the BBC's exit poll.

The other significant aspect of Thursday's vote was that turnout fell by 6 or 7 points, to about the lowest level recorded since the war. This evidence of voter apathy might take some of the shine off Mr Blair's landslide, suggesting that it was an unenthusiastic vote against the Tories rather than a positive endorsement of New Labour. But the final Independent/Harris- now that we can start believing in opinion polls again - found no difference between this election and the last one. In both cases, 20 per cent of voters said they were voting primarily against a party. And most of the large falls in turnout were confined to safe Labour seats, where the voting system offers no encouragement for people to make the trip to the polling station.

NEWPORT EAST

Party	1992	1997
Labour	52,567 (57.8%)	52,567 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

NEWPORT WEST

Party	1992	1997
Labour	53,914 (57.8%)	53,914 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

NEWRY & ARMAUGH

Party	1992	1997
Labour	70,252 (57.8%)	70,252 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

NORFOLK MID

Party	1992	1997
Labour	75,311 (57.8%)	75,311 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

NORFOLK NORTH

Party	1992	1997
Labour	71,113 (57.8%)	71,113 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

NORFOLK NORTH WEST

Party	1992	1997
Labour	77,083 (57.8%)	77,083 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

NORWICH NORTH

Party	1992	1997
Labour	72,521 (57.8%)	72,521 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

NORWICH SOUTH

Party	1992	1997
Labour	69,881 (57.8%)	69,881 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

NOTTINGHAM EAST

Party	1992	1997
Labour	68,181 (57.8%)	68,181 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

NOTTINGHAM NORTH

Party	1992	1997
Labour	65,681 (57.8%)	65,681 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

NOTTINGHAM SOUTH

Party	1992	1997
Labour	72,418 (57.8%)	72,418 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

NUNEATON

Party	1992	1997
Labour	70,252 (57.8%)	70,252 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

OXFORD EAST

Party	1992	1997
Labour	68,181 (57.8%)	68,181 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

OXFORD WEST & ABINGDON

Party	1992	1997
Labour	78,383 (57.8%)	78,383 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

PAISLEY NORTH

Party	1992	1997
Labour	47,725 (57.8%)	47,725 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

PAISLEY SOUTH

Party	1992	1997
Labour	54,045 (57.8%)	54,045 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

PORTSMOUTH NORTH

Party	1992	1997
Labour	64,338 (57.8%)	64,338 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

PORTSMOUTH SOUTH

Party	1992	1997
Labour	65,114 (57.8%)	65,114 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

PITNEY

Party	1992	1997
Labour	61,175 (57.8%)	61,175 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

PLYMOUTH DEVONPORT

Party	1992	1997
Labour	74,483 (57.8%)	74,483 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

PLYMOUTH SUTTON

Party	1992	1997
Labour	61,175 (57.8%)	61,175 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

POOLE

Party	1992	1997
Labour	60,078 (57.8%)	60,078 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

POPLAR & CANNING TOWN

Party	1992	1997
Labour	67,172 (57.8%)	67,172 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

PRESTON

Party	1992	1997
Labour	71,113 (57.8%)	71,113 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

READING EAST

Party	1992	1997
Labour	71,113 (57.8%)	71,113 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

READING WEST

Party	1992	1997
Labour	67,172 (57.8%)	67,172 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

REDDAR

Party	1992	1997
Labour	60,078 (57.8%)	60,078 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

REDDITCH

Party	1992	1997
Labour	61,175 (57.8%)	61,175 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

REGEN'S PARK & KENSINGTON

Party	1992	1997
Labour	71,113 (57.8%)	71,113 (57.8%)
Conservative	21,481 (23.4%)	21,481 (23.4%)
Liberal Democrat	7,553 (8.2%)	7,553 (8.2%)
Tory	3,983 (4.3%)	3,983 (4.3%)
Other	1,067 (1.2%)	1,067 (1.2%)

RENNFREW WEST

Party	1992	1997
Labour	67,172 (57.8%)	100,000 (55.0%)
Conservative	48,828 (42.2%)	79,000 (43.0%)
Liberal Democrat	1,000 (0.9%)	1,000 (0.5%)
Other	200 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)

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Now relax, and change Britain for ever

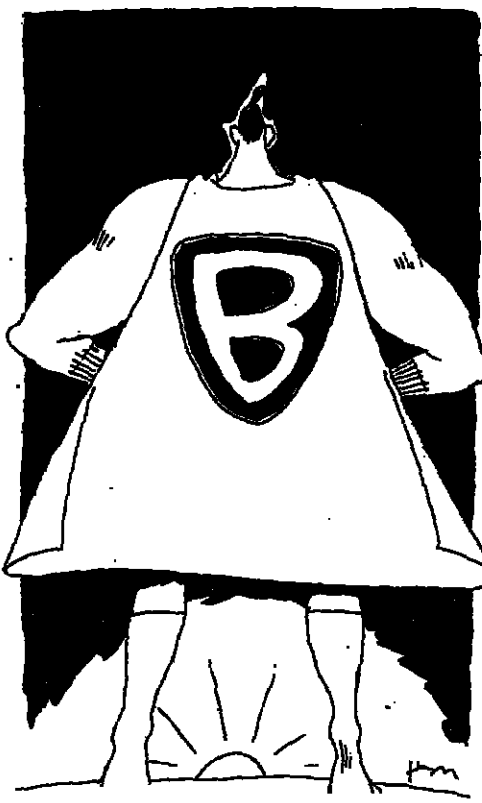
Yes, the world has turned over. A continent has sunk, and a new continent, maybe an even bigger one, has risen. A whole new race of MPs populates this place, young, untrammelled by out of date ideologies, relaxed in their social and even sexual orientation, confident of their place in the world.

Let's first enjoy this spring, relish it. Watching the family Blair and all those who love and cherish them cheer all the way through from late on Thursday night to the steps of No 10, who could not help but be touched? You could point out, with a few drops of cold water, that Labour secured the assent of only 45 per cent of voters, which translates into some 32 per cent of the adult British population, which has some significance when we talk about wills and mandates, and what kind of seat majority is actually right and proper. But, accepting the peculiarities of our electoral system - of which more anon - it is absurd to hedge Tony Blair's triumph around with caveats and qualifications.

He now stands a Colossus astride his party, more free to command the British state than - well, anyone really, for a long, long time. Even if he does experience a little rebellion here and there, some Cabinet dissension, a little leftish backbench revolt, it will matter little. His majority is so huge, and so heavily comprised of his New Labour devotees, that

he could operate virtually as a dictator unbound. The scale of his win awards Mr Blair vast discretionary power to make ministers, to shape policies, to enthuse, motivate, regenerate, to send signals home and abroad - in short, to remake British politics. His situation is rich in opportunity, and that is why this is such a thrilling political moment. So let's have some thrills. How about offering the Liberal Democrats some ministerial posts? How about remaking British politics, as he said he would?

Tony Blair has a chance of greatness. The first signs are good. He was wise enough to recognise that he should feel humbled by the scale of his victory. There was no trace of overweening pride or arrogance in his manner yesterday. Still, it would be a mistake to let humility turn into timidity. Much will depend, during these early hours in power, on how rapidly Mr Blair and his entourage throw off the clenched reflexes of campaigning, and start to look to the long haul - five, 10, 15 years. It is not just a matter of appointments and offices. Labour's inner circle needs to relax into the historic choices that now confront them. Labour's campaign was sensational: the most professional in British history. (The Lib Dems' campaign was pretty stunning too.) The intelligence and drive that produced such a tremendous victory now needs to adopt a new style: not the hard, sphincter-tight



professionalism of campaigning, but the creativity of ideas and administrative imagination that makes a party one of government rather than opposition. Mr Blair said he wants to include, not exclude: let's see his people behave accordingly, all of them. If they do, he can ride this popular wave for a long, long time - after all, the Conservatives are not going to have much hope of effectively opposing for a good while yet.

The Labour leader does seem to be aware of the magnitude of his opportunity. Britain has indisputably voted for a new way forward. But which way, exactly? Apart from acceptance that Labour had reformed, and that the Tories were spent, there was no single "message" from voters, whether about Europe, constitutional change, the National Health Service or any of the items on the formal menu Labour offered. Mr Blair will rightly consider himself bound by his party's central promises on income tax, jobs for youth and the rest - but there then opens a huge territory on which he can range at large.

And that is where he must lead. We hope that he lays a firm hand on his enormous new power, and decides to steer Britain on to a new course, changing the minds of Euro-sceptics all over our land, and winning his party (and himself) over to the need for a lasting reform of the constitution.

The huge fund of goodwill spilling out

yesterday could be used by New Labour to fire the populace. Mr Blair could use his astonishing strength at home to lead in Europe. He is fresh, full of potential. He seemed, yesterday, a little awed by the responsibility, and quite right too. But he must use it, quickly, to swing Britain away from its recent political cynicisms and failures.

The test of Tony Blair's mettle will be whether he uses this majority to create the "new politics" he has promised. When the House of Commons reassembles he will point to the mass of Labour MPs at his back and rightly say that with them - the increased numbers of women, their relative youth - come new political responses. But the merest glance at the psephological arithmetic points out what he must also do. First-past-the-post, single-member seats produce unjust results. Conservative supporters in Scotland and Wales have been disenfranchised. Despite their increased seats, the Liberal Democrats have fewer members than their share of the vote deserves. By moving towards proportional representation, Tony Blair's majority gives him an unprecedented opportunity to change the face of British electoral politics for ever. Thursday night was no revolution in itself: it does, however, provide the most breathtaking chance of conducting a real revolution with the overwhelming assent of the people. And the sun shone, too.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Labour: how we will restore the NHS as a great public service

Sir: You commented (28 April) that all parties in this election had "almost completely ignored the NHS's plight". We in the Labour Party - with three national press conferences, a poster campaign, a series of interviews, speeches and party election broadcasts - certainly haven't.

We believe that the future of the NHS has in fact been one of the most important issues in the election campaign. And although we don't claim that it is possible to put

everything right overnight, we are determined to make a serious start on the restoration of the NHS as a great public service run in co-operation for patients rather than as a cluster of squabbling commercial businesses.

As part of that purpose we intend to reduce the costs of bureaucracy and administration in the NHS and direct resources out of paperwork and into patient care.

Your article (30 April), claiming that this would be impossible without

either losing jobs or increasing administrative costs (both claims were made in the same article) ignored the specific proposals we have to end the internal market processes which are the root cause of the problem. We want to replace 3,000 fundholding units with 500 commissioning groups. We will replace annual contracts with three to five-year agreements. We will end the paper chase of individual patient invoicing. All of these changes will

reduce bureaucratic costs and help us to devote extra resources to improving patient care.

These proposals are not just about saving money, reducing bureaucracy and getting more patients off the waiting lists. They are also about transforming the entire competitive culture that has caused such damage over recent years.

CHRIS SMITH
Labour Campaign Headquarters
London N1

Major's place in history

Sir: Polly Toynbee's column on John Major (1 May) leaves a rather sour after-taste. Whatever his faults Mr Major has a number of achievements to his credit: his handling of the Gulf war, the negotiations over the Maastricht treaty, the attempt at a peace process in Northern Ireland, an improving economy.

I suspect Mr Major will be treated more kindly by history than Ms Toynbee thinks.

KENNETH BROWNELL
London E8

Stand by for interest rates to go up

Sir: Chancellors of the Exchequer who take inflationary risks with the economy are seldom blamed at the time, so Diane Coyle's observation (1 May) that "Mr Clarke has primed the pump a bit too much ahead of the election" is welcome. In due course, he is sure to join the ranks of Lawson, Barber and Maudling - Chancellors irredeemably associated with excess rather than success.

The money supply (M4) is expanding well outside the Bank of England's monitoring range of between 3 and 9 per cent, so a substantial rise in interest rates is overdue.

W REYRES
London NW5

Overdue return to Georgian values

Sir: I have just come across this extract from Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*:

"When it shall be said in any country in the world: 'My poor are happy; neither ignorance nor distress is to be found among them; my jails are empty of prisoners, my streets of beggars; the aged are not in want; the taxes are not oppressive; the rational world is my friend because I am a friend of its happiness' - when these things can be said, then may that country boast of its constitution and government."

CLIFFORD A BROWN
Bognor Regis,
West Sussex

Champagne socialism

Sir: Congratulations to the Labour Party. However, after watching their celebrations on Friday morning can I offer this advice, which may avoid embarrassment in the future?

Twisting a champagne cork usually produces one of two results: a broken cork or a deluge.

After removing the retaining wire hold the bottle at 45 degrees and apply firm thumb pressure upwards on the cork where it joins the bottle. Repeat two or three times before gently twisting the cork to remove.

BOB RYAN
Virginia Water, Surrey

Odd one out

Sir: We note that Scotland and Wales have totally rejected the Tory party, but not so England.

Is it not the time to consider the possible advantages, nay, the inevitability, of devolution for England?

M GEDE
11 BATES
Colchester, Essex

Watery grave

Sir: Clear blue slaughter?
EUAN CARTWRIGHT
Carlisle

LETTER from THE EDITOR

Herewith an epistle from an exhausted, unslept, raw-eyed and, I fear, rather smelly editor. Election campaigns are always tiring affairs for hacks, but this is especially so on a small paper like *The Independent*. After a long night of curled sandwiches, warm lager, battered keyboards and much shouting, the newsroom looked rather as I imagine the Japanese embassy in Lima to have been in the closing stages of the hostage crisis. By the end of this campaign, our election desk, confined to a small glass cubicle echoing with the constant babble from rival televisions, had begun to behave like a bunch of caged primates subjected to cruel and unusual experimentation - hysterical giggles of laughter, strange and impenetrable jokes; a cruel enthusiasm for the termination of certain political careers. But they did the business. GK Chesterton had some line about journalists working harder than any other lazy people in the world. I know now what he means.

According to a stream of nice letters, you seemed to think so, anyway. We didn't get the lift in sales we'd had in earlier elections, though things picked up briskly in the last few days of campaigning, and we seem to have outdone the rest yesterday, when it really mattered. But then newspapers generally weren't avidly consumed during the campaign. I think people simply reckoned they knew the likely result and mentally shrugged. Now it's over, and the result is more interesting and unexpected than anything in the campaign. I suspect interest will pick up.

What, though, about our experiment of sending reporters to marginal constituencies to talk to swing voters? That produced a feeling, halfway through the campaign, that "it isn't over yet". In fact, given the crushing nature of the defeat, it must have been, or nearly. Yet the tentativeness of these swing voters about New Labour was real enough: the doubts of undecided people only a couple of weeks before polling told a story of a country that has grown a little cynical of politics. If Tony Blair can break down that cynicism, he will have done a great job for the country.

Scepticism, though, is a different matter. In this campaign, *Independent* readers were disproportionately pro-Labour and pro-Liberal Democrat - and so, I have to say, was the paper's staff, according to straw polls in the office. When we put our final edition to bed on Thursday night, I made a short speech of thanks to the *Stakhanovites* still standing, and including a word of commiseration to all Tory-voting colleagues. A single, two-fingered hand was raised from the other end of the room.

Yet the paper continued to ask uncomfortable questions through the campaign - infuriating Labour headquarters. We won't stop doing so now Labour is so securely in government, and you wouldn't

After a long night of curled sandwiches, warm lager and much shouting, the newsroom looked rather as I imagine the closing stages of the Japanese embassy siege to have been

expect us to. I want the paper to offer constructive, friendly analysis, but to do so standing clearly outside the Labour family. The size of Blair's triumph compels respect and a certain humility from the press - his spin doctors and political strategists could not have played it better. But any journalism worth its salt will be compelled to worry late at night about the huge, unconstrained power of the new government. We want it to succeed, but we are wary of everyone in power. We cannot help it: that is our instinct. There is nothing more important now than to give this hugely popular new leader a fair press: but political journalism without scepticism - and a due measure of outright impudence - is merely turgid propaganda. British politics is in a sense starting again and will require a new standard of reporting to get its measure; and that is what we will do.

Andrew Marr

QUOTE UNQUOTE

When the curtain falls, it's time to get off the stage - John Major, announcing his intention to stand down as leader of the Conservative Party.

I will not let you down - Tony Blair, after winning Sedgefield.

This result demonstrates that being openly gay is not a barrier to election - Stephen Twigg, Labour, who ousted the former defence secretary Michael Portillo in Enfield Southgate.

And James Goldsmith, you can get off back to Mexico knowing that your attempt to buy the British political system has failed - David Mellor, after his defeat at Putney.

Oh my God, it's the night of the living dead - Boy George, pop star, after winning a legal battle with Kirk Brandon over a disputed gay affair, then hearing that Brandon planned to sue him in the US.

The trouble with writing a novel about the suburbs is that you would have to go and live in them - Martin Amis, novelist.

If we encourage the use of mean, trite, ordinary language, we encourage a mean, trite and ordinary view of the world we inhabit - the Prince of Wales, lamenting what he sees as a decline in standards of English.

There was no sadness at an era passed, rather the reverse - a feeling of relief - Geoffrey Page, of the Leander Rowing Club, after members voted to admit women for the first time in its 179-year history.

Now we can start doing business over the single currency

Sir: Now that New Labour have won the election, the Prime Minister must attend urgently to Britain's real interests in Europe.

The defeated nationalists needed enemies, but patriots know that it is in their country's interests to make friends with their neighbours, to see what we can do together that we cannot do separately.

Britain's first need is for a stable currency, not an unstable pound which makes British industry pay 40 per cent more interest for new investment than our main competitors and whose sudden surges cut harshly into the cashflow of our exporters. It is in our national interest that the European economy should not be run by the unaccountable decisions of the Bundesbank, but that the Governor of the Bank of England should be part of the decision-making process of a European currency. And it is strongly in our interest that we should be in this new currency in the first wave. Otherwise, as in the past, we will arrive after all the key

decisions have been made and after we have had to raise interest rates by 2/3 per cent above their current premium in order to prevent a run out of sterling into the strongest currency in the world.

The sharp reduction in interest rates with a new currency will give a huge relief to the exchequer and the boost to industrial investment which British industry needs to recover our trade surplus, expand our labour-intensive industries and stop having to pay two million people to do nothing. That is the real way to fill the budget black hole without raising taxes.

At Maastricht, Chancellor Kohl said that he would not agree to give up the DMark without an increase in democratic accountability through an increase in the powers of the elected European Parliament. The last British government vetoed that. Our new government should support any new proposal for an open and democratic Europe.

Sir FRED CATHERWOOD
Balsham, Cambridge

US lessons on the minimum wage

Sir: Hamish McRae's account (29 April) of the success of the American economy in creating 12 million new jobs without wage inflation surprisingly omitted two words crucial to the present debate - minimum wage.

He quotes evidence that most of these new jobs were created in small and medium-sized firms in the service industries, the very sector which in the UK has been most vociferous in its opposition to the minimum wage.

Opponents usually ignore the American evidence. Kenneth Clarke dismissed the American rate as very low. Here are the facts: the federal minimum wage is \$4.75 an hour, which on 1 September will be increased to \$5.15. People under 20 may be paid a minimum \$4.25 an hour during the first 90 days of their initial employment.

Employers may not dismiss any employee to hire someone at the youth rate. The Act also requires that employees be paid one and a half times their regular pay for all hours worked over 40 in a working week.

These facts and Hamish McRae's analysis make nonsense of the claims that a minimum wage destroys jobs and pushes up labour costs. I take it he looks forward to its beneficial effect in the UK during the coming years.

BERNARD KEEFFE
London SE23

Next time, can I have a vote that counts?

Sir: Your leading article of 1 May rightly urged us to give democracy a go. Time has taught me that elections are about choosing the bad over the worse, and I decided to vote Labour because I would rather have a useless government than an evil one. The disillusionment I can live with, but what I find so intolerable is that, for the fourth time out of four, my vote counts for nothing, because I live in a safe seat.

No one has canvassed my street, and two of the major parties have not even sent a leaflet. This election has been entirely about capturing the support of a relatively small number of terminally indecisive and geographically fortunate floating voters in marginal constituencies.

Would Labour have had the same manifesto and exhibited the same bland caution if everyone's vote was worth having, and would your correspondent Beverley Johnston (letter, 1 May) know so many frustrated Lib-Dems?

By all means encourage us to use the blunt instrument of change that we have, but now can you begin encouraging someone to sharpen it? Next time I'd like my vote to count.

CHAS LOFT
London E8

Sir: Thanks to the accurate coverage and advice offered by newspapers such as this one, the British people have learned to vote tactically within the present absurd electoral system in order to produce a result reasonably close to what they actually want.

We must hope it is the last occasion on which they will be obliged to do so.

Dr GRAHAM SHIPLEY
Leicester



Ben Bradshaw campaigning in Exeter. The newly-elected Labour MP is openly gay. Photograph: Marc Hill

Breath of fresh air in the moral maze

Sir: By a pleasant irony, the very first seat that the Conservatives lost was Edgworth, where the retiring MP was Dame Jill Knight, one of those who supported the infamous Clause 28.

Three hours later, we saw the Exeter result. Nothing ironic about that. Decent, non-radical Middle Englanders save the local Conservative Party offering it a

straight vote for repressive "family values" - and walked away. The Labour candidate, fighting scrupulously on national issues, won by 11,000 votes.

Suddenly, fresh air and daylight seem to have broken in on a rather marshy corner of the moral maze.

Dr MICHAEL HALLS
Christow, Devon

BSE scandal won't go away

Sir: Dogs developing a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy like BSE (report, 28 April); 6,117 BSE carcasses buried; blood transfusions may actually be a risk... why should this come out three days before an election? Full marks to *The Independent* for finding it out and letting us know, but could it be that the Ministry of Agriculture would rather that this data came out then than into the hands of a new government? Hidden information leads to public or judicial inquiries...

and the ministry wouldn't want that, would it?

If I can give the incomers some advice, there is plenty more hidden than they are telling you and the lack of adequate research will not be obvious. An inquiry really is needed or the new government will continue to be blamed for the errors of the past.

Dr STEPHEN DEALLER
Medical Microbiologist
Burnley,
Lancashire

These pranksters are no joke

Sir: In the parliamentary constituency in which I live a candidate was allowed to stand for election under the official description "New Labour". The young man's candidature does not appear to have been accompanied by any statement of his views, or his reasons for standing, or by any communication with the electorate.

It is to be presumed that the prankster's aim was to harm the interests of the Labour Party by deceiving and confusing the voters. A candidate calling himself a Liberal Democrat probably harmed

the Liberal Democrat candidate in a recent election elsewhere.

The new Home Secretary should bring forward legislation to require returning officers to disallow official descriptions of candidates whose aim is to confuse the electorate. This would not disqualify the unusual, the humorously intended or the downright eccentric descriptions which sometimes enliven elections, but it would rule out those not adopted in good faith.

The Rev G W F LANG
London W6

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. (Fax 0171-293 2856; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) and include a daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

A seismic shift in the political landscape

The people decided. And they did so with a ruthlessness and certainty that no one, not the man whom it propelled to power, nor his crushed opponents, nor the candidates in improbable seats who never expected to win, had ever envisaged. And in the process Britain demonstrated things, small and not so small, about herself that even she had forgotten. Her commonsense ability, for example, to discriminate between kinds of behaviour lumped lazily together as sleaze. While the voters of Beckenham returned Piers Merchant – exposed in *The Sun* for his canoodling with a nightclub hostess – on the correct grounds that his aberration, however ludicrous, had nothing to do with his fitness as an MP, the electors of Tatton confounded many predictions and turfed out Neil Hamilton in favour of a good and brave war correspondent who arrived in a white suit and with no politics except a timely mission to clean up politics. And in doing so, triumphantly exploded the introverted myth that running Hamilton as a candidate would not be a liability to a party already on its knees. There was common sense, and for that matter liberalism. Offered the choice between an openly gay Labour candidate and a right-wing Conservative who menacingly exploited his adherence to “family values” throughout his campaign, previously Tory Exeter cheerfully opted for the Labour man by a margin of more than 11,000.

These are telling details of a seismic shift to which few of the old clichés about transforming political landscapes do justice. The outcome promises not only to realise at a stroke the Wilsonian dream – and in his time it was only a dream – of Labour as the natural party of government. Many of the undecideds on whom ministers based their last flickering hopes turned out to be plotting to vote Labour or Liberal Democrat rather than sullenly refusing to admit their intention to vote Tory. And the wipe-out in Scotland and Wales has confined Conservatism, at least for a time, to just the English nation, leaving Labour with the best claim to be the party of the Union. It is ironic, given the campaign which John Major waged against the dangers of devolution, that Labour and Liberal Democrats are now the British parties – while also maintaining a towering majority of MPs in England itself.

Never in this century have the Conservatives, facing a future, as one surviving ex-minister put it yesterday, as a parliamentary “guerrilla army”, been so comprehensively detached from their foundations. The determination with which the Tories were ousted is demonstrated by the number of seats in which the Labour vote willingly squeezed itself to ensure a Liberal Democrat victory. The voters wanted to dispatch the Tory party, and they found, as never before, the means of doing it.

The landslide (it seems a pedestrian way of describing a majority of 180) has lessons for the Tories which there is every danger they will fail to absorb in the heat and bitterness of a leadership campaign, but which Ken Clarke,



Donald MacIntyre
There is every danger that the Tories will fail to absorb the real lessons of Labour's victory

who yesterday declared himself a candidate, will do his best to impart to a party in which the right may prove less dominant than originally feared. There is no sign, for example, that giving Europe a higher profile in the campaign than the economy helped the Tories. Or that outright opposition to the single currency was any help to the Tory candidates who proclaimed it. The procession to the electoral tumbrels of the Lamonts, the Ivan Lawrences, and dozens of others are powerful testament to that. In the main, the Goldsmith experiment was contemptuously dispatched. But the more important question is what the awesome majority means for the Blair government.

First, it gives Tony Blair an historic opportunity for reform. Do the Tory peers, for example, really intend to flout the Salisbury doctrine that a government should be free to implement its manifesto, by attempting to sabotage devolution, or indeed reform of their own House, when the manifesto pledges are underpinned by 419 MPs of the governing party in the Commons? Nothing would better demonstrate their own obsolescence.

But it is also Blair's majority: a majority for New Labour delivered in part because those who voted for him believed he had ditched the party's addiction to the tax and spending spiral. Having recruited it, he isn't about to betray the centre. As the architect of this majority, Blair will, I suspect, be neither triumphalist or idealist in its use. On Europe, he has stunning freedom to negotiate as he wants. But he also knows that the public is deeply wary of further integration, and that those fears which were exposed in the campaign will have to be heeded.

One of his circle yesterday recollected *Harley Shawcross's* infamous remark after Clement Attlee's 1945 victory that “we are the masters now” in order to emphasise that this would not be the spirit in which the Blair administration would be conducted. His future relations with Paddy Ashdown's Liberal Democrats, after their own far from negligible triumphs, remain cloudy; but it surely misjudges his mood to think that he will not want them as outsiders at least to the project of reform and social renewal to which he's now dedicated. It is Mr Ashdown's party, after all, which takes the anti-Tory vote share up to a breathtaking 62 per cent.

And all this doesn't mean Toryism with another face, however much some people may hope or fear it does. When Blair said last weekend – in a much dissected remark – that the left should realise that nothing has been ceded in the campaign which can't be recovered in office, he meant something: that the campaign which triumphantly delivered victory, never, even at its most defensive, sacrificed the principles in the programme on which he stood. Fulfilling those aspirations on the NHS, on education, on welfare reform may be only a start. But what a start. The electorate has willed their new prime minister to give them a reason not to be cynical. It won't be easy. But yesterday in Downing Street he looked like a man who wants to do just that. Savour it: history brings few glad, confident mornings like this.

It's goodbye to Mr In-Between

Despite his achievements, John Major will be remembered as the prime minister who came after Thatcher and before Blair, says Andrew Marr



Yesterday's man: as a political leader, John Major could comfort and mildly amuse much of the nation, but he never roused us or inspired us

John Major took the shattering defeat he will be blamed for with the dignity and almost eerie self-control that we have come to expect. He did not try to evade what happened. He was generous to Tony Blair, and sensible in quickly announcing his own exit. This is the moment, then, to look back before we look forward and ask: What did John Major mean?

Here is one measure of how much he mattered: had he not become Prime Minister to succeed Margaret Thatcher, there is a good chance that Labour would have won in 1992. This week, the contest would have been between a Kincock-led governing party that had been obliged to raise taxes and endure the full storm of Euro-phobia, and a revitalised Tory party, led by – who knows?

Yet even that measure, a fantasy one, defines Mr Major's misfortune in politics: he has been a man who stopped things happening rather than one who made things happen. By beating Labour at the polls, he finally blocked British socialism. He stopped the Conservative Party falling apart over Europe, if perhaps only temporarily and at great personal cost. He cancelled the poll tax, or at least caused it to be cancelled. He prevented the Maastricht treaty from being a straightforward lever towards greater integration and blocked the single currency with our opt-out.

These are huge negative achievements. He has certainly left a mark on the country. No Major, no New Labour. Today Tony Blair would be, perhaps, an outgoing Home Secretary, shaking his head and warning of the need for his party to change. Clause IV would still be enshrined in the Labour Party constitution. The trade unions would be embedded both in the Labour Party's policy-making and in national industrial policy.

No Major, no opt-out from economic and monetary union. Imagine it: today we would be heading apparently unopposedly for the single currency. How dramatically would that have changed our politics? Would the Tories not now be campaigning openly as a national party, and calling for withdrawal from the coming federation?

We cannot really know. Maybe Michael Heseltine would have succeeded Thatcher, somehow held the party together (I doubt it) and negotiated a similar Maastricht position (I doubt that, too). Perhaps the delours of the Major years, from the policy disaster of Black Wednesday to the real disaster of the BSE crisis, would have been better handled by another Tory leader or a Kincock administration.

All we know for sure is that Major himself will be remembered more for the person he replaced, and the electoral landslide that finally buried him, than for what he did himself. In

policy terms, there was little that is distinctive in “Majorism”. The Citizen's Charter was a trendy, consumer-power idea which was fine as far as it went, but which frankly didn't go very far. The “next steps” living-off and commercialisation of parts of the state bureaucracy were a logical extension of privatisation and have saved taxpayers' money. But the ideas came from abroad and have not, to date, managed to reconcile private business culture with public service.

In the health service, the introduction of market-mimicking mechanisms and fund-holding produced some greater efficiencies and better, richer GP practices, but at the cost of an excessive and unaccountable new health bureaucracy. The “two-tier health service” has moved from being a rhetorical Opposition objection to being hard, visible fact. Like the utility privatisations, some NHS trusts have produced “fat cat” managers whose attitudes

man. How many other people in modern British history can claim as much?

That is a great achievement, whether or not the Irish dilemma is resolvable. We should never forget it. But it has then to be said that Major did not pursue the process with as much determination when it began to fall apart, and the warnings from Dublin grew more shrill and more panicky. He adopted a morally coherent but inflexible negotiating posture. Why? Partly because he thought it right, but also because he judged the thinness of his parliamentary majority and the simmering rebelliousness of strongly pro-Ulster Tory MPs made it impossible to apply yet more pressure on the Unionists. Another leader might have made another judgement – might have looked at the Westminster arithmetic, realised that there was a risk of this being the first administration to fall on the Irish question since Gladstone's – and pressed

on anyway. Even had that happened, the Irish parties might have been wholly resistant to further pressing. We cannot know. But at any rate, Mr Major's Northern Irish breakthrough remains a salient won on behalf of peaceable humanity, not a settlement achieved. At home, he did not do enough for what we learnt to call the underclass, nor for the young unemployed. Few of us doubted his own decent instincts – though in political combat he could be an angry, sinuous and vengeful man. But his own social instincts were never made flesh as working policies. His staunch anti-racism, his genuine dislike of the smugness and patronising complacency of much of British life, his tolerance towards the peculiarities and lapses of others and his feeling for poorer, struggling citizens – none of this took us much further towards the “classless society” he artlessly proclaimed.

As a political leader, he could comfort and mildly amuse much of the nation, but he never roused us or inspired us. Throughout his time in

Downing Street, he was a member of the British family, rather than the family head.

He was the blinking, decent-looking bloke at the head of an ill-disciplined and disloyal crew, whose rats and fanatics got most of the coverage. They, above all, stopped any bigger messages breaking through about the economy or social reform, and as time went on Westminster under Major became an increasingly surreal sideshow. There were lurid sleaze stories, incomprehensible vendettas and endless arguments about the constitution between strange men in blazers ... and there seemed only a weak link between all that and daily life.

I think it was that broken link between what the Tories were up to under Major and the country's attention or respect that most explains the Labour landslide. Had John Major been a better leader, he would have silenced the worst of the disloyalists and managed, somehow, to regain our attention. But he wasn't, and didn't, and paid the penalty.

If that seems a harsh verdict, it is also worth saying that he was, perhaps, the leader for his time. After the turmoil and high emotion of the Thatcher years, he gave the nation a kind of rest. Ideologically, he was the winning pro-market side. But he was also an early British victim of the relative loss of power and status of national leaders in the age of global markets – and the victim this week of the lurches in voter mood which may be part of that post-ideological age.

He was a too-still point in a fast-turning world. The Major years have been years of great cultural and commercial vibrancy, but of political hesitation. As between full-hearted engagement in European Union and the beginnings of withdrawal from that Franco-German project, he dithered. But perhaps dithering was exactly what Britain wanted from him.

Major was not a great prime minister. He would probably concede that himself. But he did his level best, with stoicism, grit and – mostly – heroic good humour while we mocked him half to death. In the end, his dignity silences the mockery. But in the end, he was our Mr In-Between: he was what happened after Margaret Thatcher, and before Tony Blair.

“It was an era of great commercial and cultural vibrancy but political hesitation”

offended the drab, but serious and honest public service culture of Britain.

In education, Major's drive to give more freedom to schools and less authority to local authorities has given some head-teachers real power to change things for the better. What he said about school culture was brave and right and was followed by Labour. His insistence on league tables, however flawed the early ones have been, was a victory for openness and information.

But in general, the education changes of the Major years lacked coherence and direction. Without differently-valued education vouchers and a far more radical attitude to what constitutes a school, he had no way of really giving parents more power. Too often “parental choice” came to mean the power of the best local schools to turn children down. If he wasn't heading back towards an 11-plus type system, it was hard to know quite where he was going. Thus far the management changes, along with the national curriculum, have gifted Britain the most divided, most centralised education system since the war.

What of the area where Major himself hoped to achieve an historic breakthrough – Northern Ireland? Had he not grasped the tentative offers of Irish nationalism early on, and stuck doggedly to the endless negotiations that followed the first IRA ceasefire, then the peace process would have been stillborn. The killings and bombings would, we must assume, have continued at the previous rate. That means that there are today hundreds of people alive who would have been dead but for John Major, and thousands whole who would have been maimed but for this tenacious and patient

Now that Blair's won, he'll dare all

Now he can be bold. And make no mistake, this is a man with a mission, and winning the election was merely the first step in a long journey, to which only he has the map. But in spite of the hopes of many in the Labour establishment, the route is not a return to some pre-Thatcher paradise, where Tony Blair picks up where Labour left off somewhere in the mid-Seventies. This movie cannot simply be entitled *The Return of the Left*. We are in uncharted waters, and the captain has so far only hinted at how radical his approach may be.

As he unfolds his plans, there will be whingeing from the crew. But it would be an error to imagine that the old-style left-right divide will recur. Even those outside the Blair circle are swept up by enthusiasm for him. Diane Abbott went so far as to suggest that Mr Blair might turn out to be Britain's Franklin Delano Roosevelt – New Labour, New Deal. Blair's aim is clearly to make the 19th-century divide in our politics irrelevant. The landslide has delivered him a parliamentary party that will help him in this task.

I wrote last week that a historic transformation was about to take place in the House of Commons, and predicted that the cultural change about to hit Parliament might amaze us all. Little did I guess what was about to unfold. Labour's huge majority will put Mr Blair into No 10 Downing Street for 10

years at least; the wave of euphoria and goodwill is already evoking overheated comparisons. I spotted the first mention of the Kennedys in an interview with Barbara Follett at luncheon yesterday – New Labour, New Camelot. The presence of the Blair children and those of many around him yesterday reinforce the contrast with an older, grey, Tory leadership. Even the sun shone for him, as he and Mrs Blair walked hand-in-hand in Downing Street.

The party that will squeeze itself on to the benches behind Mr Blair will be younger. It will be more female than any governing party in history. I am sure that the instant analysis will show that they represent a new, less classbound, less tribal grouping than any Labour has returned before.

Last Saturday I discussed the likely influence of the new breed of former student politicians in the new Parliament. There are, it turns out, no less than six former presidents of the National Union of Students in the new PLP: the most spectacular victory of the night, the defeat of Michael Portillo, was scored by one of them, Stephen Twigg. Fascinatingly, Twigg, the most surprised man in the country, instinctively thanked his Liberal Democrat opponents for their tactical voting. This was the crumbling of tribal political loyalty laid naked. In the last full week of the campaign I interviewed Blair about his policies for



Trevor Phillips
The new premier and those who will sit behind him owe no debt to the party's history

the nation's capital. By this point he had become the perfect candidate: charming, confident, focused, unshakable. He believed that he would win, and had already started to move beyond the campaign. Not only did he have a policy; he had decided what he would do with it. For example, the manifesto for London projected both a directly elected mayor and a directly elected council for London, without making a choice about who would actually run the city. This was clearly a compromise to keep his Environment Secretary Frank Dobson, who hates the idea of a mayor, outside. Yet, when asked directly, Blair did not hesitate for a nanosecond; he opted for what he called a “strong, individual leader” who could bind people together. Sounds familiar? If he were not otherwise engaged, he'd fancy the job himself.

What cannot be said often enough about Blair is this: he is a man who carries no baggage. His clothes, his bearing, his speech hold no obvious clues to his origins. Ironically, though his opponent coined the phrase “the classless society”, it is Blair who most accurately embodies it. He has no debts to Labour history, in that he does not come from any of Labour's great battalions – trade unions, leftist intelligentsia, the Celtic mafias with which both Smith and Kincock were identified. And those who will sit behind him, many of whom I have talked to in *The Midnight Hour* over the

past two years, are equally *déclassé*. Gisela Stuart, whose election in Edgbaston signalled what was to come, could have come straight out of central casting: young, attractive, direct. Even her German accent did not detract from the image. It is precisely the fact that Blair and his new party have broken with the cultural inheritances of Labour that will allow them to do things that Labour would never before have dared to do.

There is a problem, however, that Mr Blair and his colleagues will be wrestling with over the next few weeks. They will have to find new peers, new bosses for quangos, new political advisers, even perhaps new faces for municipal power. Even before the results were coming in, the sycophants were lining up. High in the stomach-turning stakes was Richard Branson's toothy appearance at the Labour victory party, coyly refusing to reveal how he voted, but managing to suggest that he had been on the side of the angels all along, and was now ready to play his party alongside the new masters.

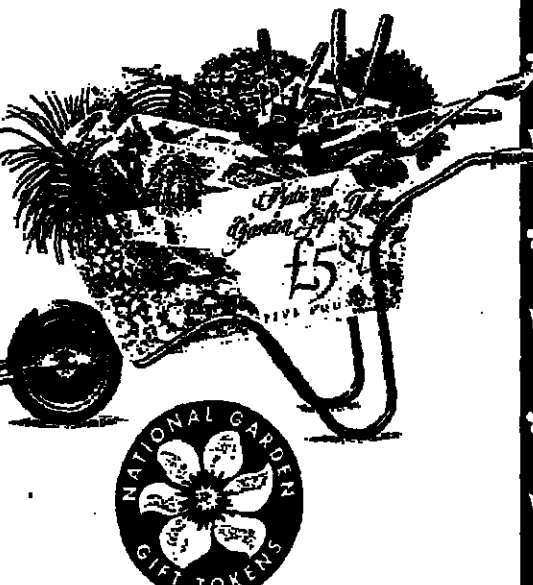
The single biggest triumph for decency in politics was not at Tatton, where the voters had a simple choice. It was in Birmingham and in Welwyn, where the Tory tribe rejected the seductive, poisonous appeal to bigotry of Nicholas Budge and David Evans. Thank you, all of you.

Spring a lovely surprise

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business & city

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Shares power ahead to new peak

But utilities take a battering
and base rates look set to riseMichael Harrison,
Diane Coyle
and Tom Stevenson

The stock market yesterday confounded expectations by surging off Labour's landslide election victory and powering ahead to close at a new record. London ignored the size of Tony Blair's majority, preferring to follow the lead of New York, where a weak set of job figures pushed the Dow higher. The FTSE 100 index of leading stocks ended the week 10.6 points higher at a new peak of 4,455.6.

Sterling also ended the day marginally higher against both the dollar and the mark after a roller-coaster session on the foreign exchanges which at one point saw the pound down by nearly five pence against the German currency.

However, it was not all joy. Utility and transport stocks took a beating as the prospect of Labour's windfall tax turned from a threat into a reality. Electricity and water stocks fell heavily as did shares in FirstBus, GoAhead and National Express as dealers fretted about tougher regulation of the bus industry under Labour.

Some economists also warned that equity markets might be underestimating the threat of Gordon Brown raising corporate taxes and slashing tax credits available to institutions in his first Budget, expected in early July. Most analysts said the scale of Labour's victory meant there was now a possibility of it pursuing more radical policies than expected, but traders' natural instincts probably played at least as big a part.

David Kern, chief economist at NatWest, said base rates were likely to rise very soon, possibly

as early as next week, to at least 6.25 per cent and possibly to 6.5 per cent to keep the lid on inflationary pressures.

He added that Gordon Brown's emergency Budget would probably produce a net fiscal tightening of £2bn-£3bn. But he also warned that if the new Chancellor reduced the tax credit available to pension funds and other tax-exempt institutions, it would increase the risk of a 10-15 per cent correction in share prices. That could wipe more than 400 points off the index.

Although higher corporate tax rates would hit company

“We can only guess how New Labour will respond to the pressures of government”

profits, that would be offset by a reduced need for higher interest rates.

Meanwhile Labour received a cautious welcome from the business community. Adair Turner, director general of the Confederation of British Industry, urged Mr Blair to consult with business before implementing his windfall tax, union recognition proposals and national minimum wage. The CBI also called on Labour to combine its support for the Social Chapter with a campaign to ensure flexible labour markets across Europe.

Ann Robinson, director-general of the British Retail

Consortium, said: “It is clear there is a real commitment to working with business.”

Ruth Lea, head of policy at the traditionally right-wing Institute of Directors, said: “The Labour party has reasonably reassured us that they are in the business of working with business.” But she added: “We still have objections to signing up to the Social Chapter and extending employment rights.”

Mark Brown, head of strategy at Hoare Govett, said: “We can only guess how New Labour will respond to the pressures and conflict of government. The uncertainties are greater than perceived wisdom suggests.”

The pound initially dived on foreign exchange markets after hitting its highest levels for almost five years earlier in the week. But it ended the day a penny higher at DM2.8030 having been as low as DM2.7560 at one point.

One of the new Chancellor's first acts could be to raise interest rates. The next monthly monetary meeting is scheduled for Wednesday and the Bank of England is expected to recommend once again a small increase.

This would disappoint exporters who fear that sterling could be driven even higher by increased interest rates. Yesterday the House Builders' Federation joined in the pleading against an increase in the cost of borrowing.

Roger Humber of the HBF said: “It is important that Gordon Brown understands that the country as a whole is not experiencing a housing market boom, and that the recovery of the market could be damaged by unnecessary increases in interest rates.”



Scottish & Newcastle, the UK's largest brewer, said yesterday it is essential that the Labour government consults widely on its plans to introduce a minimum wage. The company, which has 28,000 employees, many of whom are bar staff (above), said the minimum wage ‘cannot sensibly be based only on hourly base rate’ but must also take account of other elements such as pensions and incentives, food and lodging and employer's investment in staff training

Beckett faces baptism of fire on bid reports

Michael Harrison

Margaret Beckett, the new President of the Board of Trade, will face three big tests of Labour's competition policy when she takes up office next week.

Waiting in her in-tray will be two reports from the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on mergers in the ferry and brewing industries. By the end of this

month she will also be in receipt of the MMC's report on British Gas's pipeline division TransCo.

Mrs Beckett is regarded as a hawk on competition policy, which may not bode well for the £200m takeover of Carlsberg Tetley by Bass. The deal would make Bass Britain's biggest brewer by far, with a near 40 per cent share of the market.

The proposed merger of P&O

and Stena's cross-Channel ferry operations was referred to the MMC last year. If it proceeds it is likely to mean reductions in capacity and job losses.

British Gas has also warned that up to 10,000 jobs are at risk unless the MMC waters down the new price controls for TransCo announced last year by the industry regulator. If the price cuts are allowed to stand it

would mean £30 off the average domestic bill.

Mrs Beckett was in favour of changing the burden of proof in takeovers so the onus is shifted on to the bidder to prove its offer is in the public interest. This commitment was omitted from Labour's business manifesto. Instead it gave an undertaking that its panel of advisers would review the public interest test.

Traders left twiddling their thumbs as massacre unfolds

Chris Hughes spent election night on Bank of America's trading floor, where all bets were off

In the City, the Tories went out not with a Big Bang but a whimper. Although the dealing rooms, many of which remained open throughout election night, had expected a Labour victory, traders none the less struggled to come to terms with the unfolding landslide.

At Bank of America, where the foreign exchange trading floor is usually deserted at night, a handful of dealers were working through election night in the expectation that business would be generated by the uncertainty following the result.

The exit polls, however, quashed

hopes that there would be any trading to bet on. Currency dealers accustomed to making multi-million pound split-second decisions found themselves twiddling their thumbs as, certainly, the speculator's enemy, prevailed. There was nothing to do but watch nervously as red “LAB GAIN” graphics flashed on their television screens.

“A complete waste of time,” was a common refrain. “There won't be any champagne,” said Nick Probert, chief trader. “I think most people will

be looking for visas to work in other countries.”

“After a hung parliament, this is the worst case scenario. The market needs volatility to make money. Ideally we'd have seen either party win with a small majority,” he added.

Plans to profit from the result were quickly dashed. “I've bought cartloads of pounds,” Mr Probert said. “Political uncertainty has been removed, and interest rates are sure to rise.”

At midnight the market had not

moved, but he remained confident. “It's early days yet.” By 2am, he was struggling to find anyone to deal with, and altered his plans.

“I must admit sterling's actually gone down. It's beginning to look not too good,” he said.

Bored, Bank of America's 10 traders kicked off an impromptu game of American football until someone scored a direct hit on another's radio-controlled Ferrari perched on a dealing terminal. Attention returned to the unfolding

drama of the election, jaws dropping at the loss of true-blue Edgbaston.

“In my heart of hearts I knew Labour would win, but this is ridiculous. This is a massacre,” said one dealer. “I find it very hard to believe Blair will stick to his promise not to raise income tax. Labour's always soaked the rich. I preferred honest John.”

The last straw came when the Labour leader's victory speech promised a society which included all classes and which was about

more than “ringing-up the next deal”.

“That says it all. I don't feel included,” said one dealer. He was interrupted by another shouting triumphantly at the television.

“You're not having Woking, Mr Blair.” Within the hour the Tory defeat had been accepted and many dealers were asleep in their chairs.

The day shift arrived to prepare for the first day of trading under New Labour. One would be Deborah, winner of the dealing floor sweepstake on the size of the Labour majority.

Lanica looks to end suspension

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

Andrew Regan's Lanica Trust said yesterday it expected its stock market listing to be restored later this month following the publication of its annual results and clarification of its legal position relating to the damages claim against it by the Co-operative Wholesale Society.

Lanica's shares have been suspended since February when details of its ultimately failed £1.2bn break-up bid for the CWS became public.

Lanica also said that Mr Regan and his business partner David Lyons intend to “vigorously” contest the legal action against them. They face a private prosecution brought by the CWS for their leading role in the break-up bid. A statement of claim is required to be served by the CWS shortly and Lanica said it would seek legal advice at that time as to the extent of its liability.

The brief statement, which

was issued late yesterday afternoon, is Lanica's first communication since the abortive bid which was planned through its Galileo offshoot. No one was available from the company to comment further.

Given the failure of the bid, Lanica's shares, which were suspended at £19.50 having soared in the previous two months, are likely to go into freefall. Galileo was put into liquidation earlier this week though the liquidators say there should be sufficient funds to make a reasonable payment to creditors.

Meanwhile, Jupiter Asset Management became the last of Mr Regan's main backers to distance themselves from his bid.

In a brief statement it said that “having initiated the liquidation of Galileo Group it has no further connection with any of the directors of Galileo”.

It added that it did not receive any documents alleged to have been stolen from the CWS.

It continued: “JAM was

shocked to learn that some of the documents it received from Galileo's professional advisers may have contained information improperly obtained from the CWS. JAM was not aware of the possibility until it became public information.”

Jupiter had acquired £1m of shares in Lanica in an off-market purchase last December. It also invested £3m in Galileo. A spokesman said that at the time of the investment Jupiter knew that the CWS was the bid target. Jupiter believes that most of those funds remain unspent and is confident of a near full recovery.

Earlier this week Killick & Co, the private client stockbroker, issued a statement condemning the use of “dishonest tactics”. Schroders, the other main backer, has already distanced itself from the affair as have Lanica and Galileo's other main advisers which included Hambros Bank, Nomura International and legal firm Travers Smith Braithwaite.

Investigations are also under way by the Serious Fraud Office and the Stock Exchange.

Comment, page 29



Andrew Regan: Faces private prosecution by CWS

HSBC James Capel has resigned as broker to Lanica Trust.

Investigations are also under way by the Serious Fraud Office and the Stock Exchange.

Comment, page 29

Wilson joins Matthew Clark

Clifford German

Matthew Clark, the cider maker which was hit hard last year by the competition from alcopops, has taken further steps to strengthen its management by appointing Graham Wilson, the former managing director of United Newspapers before it merged with MAI, as non-executive chairman.

He replaces Michael Garner, who took over as interim chairman following the death of Michael Cottrell last October. Mr Wilson started work yesterday and would give the job as much time as it needed, a spokesman said. His salary is not yet being divulged, but he will not have a package of incentives.

The board led by Peter Aikens, chief executive, has been under pressure from shareholders after the company issued a shock profits warning

last autumn which it blamed on alcopops.

A new marketing strategy was introduced in January based on increased advertising, and a new marketing director was brought in from Guinness in February. Yesterday's appointment completes the management team of four executive and three non-executive directors.

On Monday a new brand, Blackthorn Gold, will be launched in draught and bottled form. Babyclash will be re-launched later in the year, followed by Dry Blackthorn and Diamond White, the strong cider which has borne the brunt of the alcopop assault.

The strategy of increased advertising has been criticised by analysts at BZW, who forecast it would lead to increased prices and falling sales.

The shares eased 1p to 276.5p yesterday.

Blakenham questioned on Penguin losses

Magnus Grimond

Lord Blakenham yesterday faced tough questioning from Pearson shareholders over the £100m accounting scandal discovered at its Penguin USA offshoot earlier this year as he took his last annual general meeting as chairman after 19 years at the head of the media to publishing group.

The criticism came as Pearson revealed a new potential £50m black hole in the shape of the “millennium time bomb” – the cost of reprogramming computers to cope with the change of date at the end of the century.

Lord Blakenham, who was the last member of the founding Cowdrey family on the board, hinted that the group was prepared to take action to recover some of its losses from the US scandal. He suggested the cover-up may have benefited not only Christina Galatro, the former credit manager in Penguin's New Jersey office at the centre of the scandal, but others as well.

“As to motive, we believe that there has been some element of personal gain involved in this matter. We may be making a move to third parties,” he revealed. Initially it had been thought that Mrs Galatro had been acting on her own out of a sense of misplaced zeal to collect debts owed the company.

Pearson refused to rule out the possibility that Arthur Anderson, its US auditors, might be sued. Pearson said it had discovered nothing to force it to increase

the size of the £100m provision taken for the losses in last year's accounts, despite the threat of legal action from the American Booksellers Association.

Marjorie Scardino, who took over as chief executive in January, emphasised that there was no evidence that senior management at Penguin was aware of any impropriety.

But the company's responses failed to satisfy some shareholders. Many expressed surprise that Mrs Galatro's activities had gone undetected for so long. “Did this woman never go on holiday?” asked one irate shareholder.

“She took rather a lot of holidays and to some fairly faraway places,” replied John Makinson, finance director.

Others were stunned that so much damage could be caused by just one person. But Mr Makinson said: “It is possible for a very determined individual to conceal an enormous amount of improper accounting,” adding that the book trade was “a very transaction-intensive business”.

Separately, the group revealed that its estimate for the cost of reprogramming computers to deal with the millennium date change was somewhere between £30m and £55m.

On current trading, Pearson said Penguin had enjoyed a good start to the year, but noted that if sterling continued to hold up against the dollar and the Spanish peseta for the rest of the year there would be an impact on the translation of overseas profits into sterling.

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low
FTSE 100	4445.00	+9.00	+0.2	4445.00	4056.60
FTSE 250	4502.10	+3.40	+0.1	4729.40	4469.40
FTSE 350	2172.50	+3.80	+0.2	2194.30	2017.90
FTSE SmallCap	2298.34	+	+0.0	2374.20	2178.28
FTSE All-Share	2138.89	+	+0.0	2163.94	1989.78
New York	6980.83	-48.16	-0.7	7085.16	5032.94
Tokyo	19275.33	+124.21	+0.6	19446.00	17303.85
Hong Kong	13020.78	+117.48	+0.9	13068.24	12065.17
Frankfurt	10990	+	+	3460.59	2846.77
Statistics as of 2 May					

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling*			UK medium gilt		
Rate	1 Month	3 Months	Rate	1 Month	3 Months
UK	6.25	7.00	7.40	8.03	7.49
US	5.82	6.25	6.89	6.86	6.93
Japan	0.53	0.81	2.33	2.51	-
Germany	3.12	3.25	-	6.34	-
Bond Yields*					
Money Market Rates			Long Bond		
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Index	10 Year	30 Year
UK	6.25	7.00	7.40	8.03	7.49
US	5.82	6.25	6.89	6.86	6.93
Japan	0.53	0.81	2.33	2.51	-
Germany	3.12	3.25	-	6.34	-
*Benchmark indices					

CURRENCIES					
\$/£			\$/DM		
Index	Yesterday	Change	Index	Yesterday	Change
\$ (London)	1.6240	-0.73c	\$ (London)	0.6158	+0.28c
\$ (New York)	1.6240	+0.30c	\$ (New York)	0.6158	-0.11c
DM (London)	2.7908	-1.89p	DM (London)	1.7188	-1.31p
¥ (London)	205.063	-10.80	¥ (London)	128.270	-20.64
£ Index	99.7	-0.4	£ Index	105.9	-0.3
OTHER INDICATORS					
Oil Brent \$			RPI		
Index	Yesterday	Change	Index	Latest	Year Ago
Oil Brent \$	18.35	-0.05	RPI	156.4	150.9
Gold \$	341.05	+0.95	GDP	109.7	107.0
Gold £	210.01	+0.41	Base Rates	-6.00pc	6.75

سكرا من الامم



JEREMY WARNER

'With Margaret Beckett now installed as President of the Board of Trade, we can expect a much tougher public interest stance on mergers and a competition policy which vigorously favours the interests of consumers and employees over those of the City and big business'

City would be wrong to think nothing will change

I'm not going to even try and address directly the question of what Labour's landslide victory means for the markets, not least because initial reaction yesterday was the exact opposite of what everyone expected. Most people assumed that a Labour win would be bad for shares but good for the pound. That was not the verdict of markets on the first day of "the new dawn". Personally I never did buy the theory that a Labour win would cause the pound to strengthen yet further, or that it would necessarily be bad for corporate Britain.

The truth of the matter is that because New Labour is an unknown quantity, with few declared policies directly affecting business, its long-term implications for markets are, for the time being, impossible to call. Labour is committed to leaving economic policy broadly unchanged, it wants a minimum wage but hasn't yet said what it will be, or what form it will take, it intends to implement the Social Chapter, but that won't mean a lot for the vast majority of businesses, and it intends to push ahead with a windfall profits tax on the privatised utilities. There are few clues as to what it intends to do on industrial or competition policy, and none whatever on monetary union.

All this, however, is not to underestimate the enormity of what's happened. It may well be that markets haven't yet fully appreciated it. Tony Blair has been given *carte blanche* to do exactly what he wants, at least for the

next five years. His desire to win a second term will temper his reforming zeal to some extent, but he is not going to miss his chance to leave his mark on history.

Most people have their own story about that point of realisation – the realisation that Labour really had changed under Tony Blair, and changed dramatically. For me, it was listening to Alistair Darling, likely to be appointed the next Chief Secretary to the Treasury any moment, talking about the City. I'd been playing devil's advocate, trying to make him say something Old Labour. Surely you are going to do something about that Square Mile of self-interest, I asked. The City is loyal to nobody's interests but its own, it has milked and destroyed our industries, and it will do its utmost to destroy you and your policies too if you ever get elected.

We've got no problem with the City, said Mr Darling, with apparent sincerity. The City is a British success story and we'll do everything we can to support it when in government. I still find that a remarkable thing for a Labour politician to say. But while I believe him, it is impossible to think Labour will leave the City entirely untouched. I'm not talking here about reform of City regulation, which in any case is likely to come quite a long way down the legislative queue. I'm thinking more about the power of the City over the national economy, its short-term approach to money and investment and the often high cost of capital.

There is not much Labour can do directly to force the City into a more politically correct approach without also undermining many of the things that make Britain so successful in financial services. But it can remove some of the in-built biases in the system towards the City's short-termist and monopolistic approach. The most obvious of these is the tax credit on dividends, the effect of which is significantly to favour indirect investment over direct and encourage companies to pay out their profit in dividends rather than re-invest it in their businesses. There are many other similar biases in the fiscal and legal system.

With Margaret Beckett now installed as President of the Board of Trade, we can also expect a much tougher public interest stance on mergers and a competition policy which vigorously favours the interests of consumers and employees over those of the City and big business. In summary, the City would be wrong to assume that just because Labour has changed so much, nothing much will change.

Newspapers love a good scandal. This is as true of the restrained and arcane environment of the business pages as it is of any other part of the paper. A scandal is any business page as much as it does a front page. So as journalists we should perhaps be grateful to Andrew Regan and his crew for giving us something to write about when everything else outside election cam-

paigning seemed to be grinding to a halt. Even for journalists, however, scandal is not without its dangers. With the reporting of a big scandal, there is a natural tendency to let rip, for the usual disciplines to fall by the wayside in the heat of the chase. This is less true, perhaps, of City scandals than political ones, for those caught up in them are generally powerful organisations prepared to spend big money on protecting their good name. I'm not objecting to this, you understand, for there is nothing wrong with trying to stop over-zealous journalists getting carried away with themselves and writing what they want to believe is the truth rather than what is actually true.

So it seemed reasonable enough for Jupiter International to employ a top firm of legal lawyers to fire off a stiff letter warning that if we persisted in trying to drag their client's name through the mud, then they would take all necessary steps to protect Jupiter's position and reputation. The problem is that in this case, we hadn't actually accused Jupiter of anything. What we had done is accurately report that SBC Warburg, advisers to the Co-op, had written to the stock exchange asking it to investigate dealings in Lancia Trust. Mr Regan's publicly quoted company. In particular, Warburg wants the Stock Exchange to look at dealings in Lancia shares by those who had invested in Galileo, the vehicle Mr Regan had intended to use for his assault on the Co-op, Jupiter,

with Schroders, Killick & Co and others, was one of those investors. Along with some of the others, it also bought shares in Lancia Trust.

It was entirely reasonable of SBC Warburg to question whether this could have amounted to insider dealing. Here's why. Lancia, the publicly quoted company, was essentially a shell operation when Mr Regan bought into it, with net assets of only £3m. Then, unbeknown to all but a few, it set up Galileo, a subsidiary with paid up share capital of £9m. This in itself could be said to constitute insider information. Killick insists it did not know what the purpose of Galileo was when it put £2m of its client's money into the vehicle, but actually that may be irrelevant. Couldn't the mere setting up of this vehicle be described as price-sensitive information? We don't yet know precisely when the Galileo investors bought into Lancia, or what the circumstances surrounding these purchases were. But it is certainly something that demands investigation. As does the assertion by Jupiter's lawyers in their letter to us that any allegation of insider dealing is unfounded "not least because all Jupiter's dealings in Lancia Trust shares have been private, off market deals, and therefore by definition cannot be insider trading". That was an exemption once upon a time, true enough, but it was swept away by the 1993 Criminal Justice Act in all but limited circumstances. Perhaps they might illuminate us further.

Murdoch loses US satellite chief

David Usborne
New York

Rupert Murdoch was vowing yesterday to continue his quest to conquer satellite television in the United States in spite of the surprise resignation late on Thursday night of Preston Padden, the head of his US Sky Broadcasting business.

Mr Padden had been leading negotiations to seal a \$1bn (£620m) joint venture with EchoStar Communications, a small Denver-based satellite broadcaster. The deal, unveiled in February, was designed as Mr Murdoch's path to launching a fully fledged Sky service in North America.

Mr Padden's departure is another sign, however, that the EchoStar arrangement may be in terminal trouble. Earlier this week, the company revealed that it had missed a deadline for a filing to US federal regulators of the details of the joint venture.

The delay had already sparked speculation that Mr Murdoch's News Corp and EchoStar were headed for divorce even before they had properly been spliced. The ostensible reason given for the hiccup was a disagreement over the kind of set-top decoder technology to be used.

But yesterday Mr Murdoch said he was not discouraged by events. Asked if he might abandon his US satellite ambitions, he retorted: "No way. We're going ahead, either on our own or with [EchoStar chairman] Charlie Ergen [if he meets the terms of the contract]."

Rumours have been flying that Mr Murdoch may already be seeking an alternative deal with Telecommunications Inc (TCI) and Time Warner, owners of the existing PrimeStar satellite service. Mr Murdoch is reported already to have met with Gerard Levin, Time Warner chief executive. Any alliance with Time

Warner is hard to envisage, however, in particular because Mr Levin's number two is Ted Turner. Messrs Turner and Murdoch had been horns-locked ever since the former was bought out by Time Warner, in particular over the refusal of Time Warner Cable to carry Mr Murdoch's fledgling Fox News Channel in New York City.

Mr Padden was said to have quit News Corp over the EchoStar deal and in particular because of personal disagreements with Mr Ergen. Mr Murdoch meanwhile said he was surprised and saddened by his resignation. "We want to keep him. We think he is a terrific piece of manpower."

News Corp's putative deal with EchoStar had met with furious opposition from others in the broadcast business and even hostility on Capitol Hill. Already, Mr Murdoch had lost a battle to persuade lawmakers to alter US copyright laws.



Going ahead: Rupert Murdoch denied he might abandon his US satellite ambitions

IN BRIEF

SFA fines Fidelity £200,000

The Securities and Futures Authority has fined Fidelity Brokerage Services £200,000, but has agreed to lift restrictions that have prevented it from taking on new business. The restrictions were imposed on 31 October last year after FBS experienced difficulties with the conversion to a new computer system and an increased volume of business. These resulted in accounting and reconciliation problems and a large number of customer complaints. The SFA said it was now satisfied that FBS had adequate systems and controls. FBS said it lost about 500 customers as a result but declined to comment on reports that the financial cost was around £30m.

Ice-cream sales boost Unilever Q1 profits

Unilever, the consumer products giant, has reported a 7 per cent increase in first-quarter pre-tax profits, boosted by strong ice-cream sales in Europe and the UK launch of the ck be fragrance. The quarter also saw the launch of pyramid shaped PG tips teabags though this included heavy advertising costs. Pre-tax profits were £538m for the three months to end of March. There were £76m of exceptional items, mostly in the European foods business. Group sales were 5 per cent higher at £8bn. The company said the programme to sell the specialty chemicals business was "on schedule".

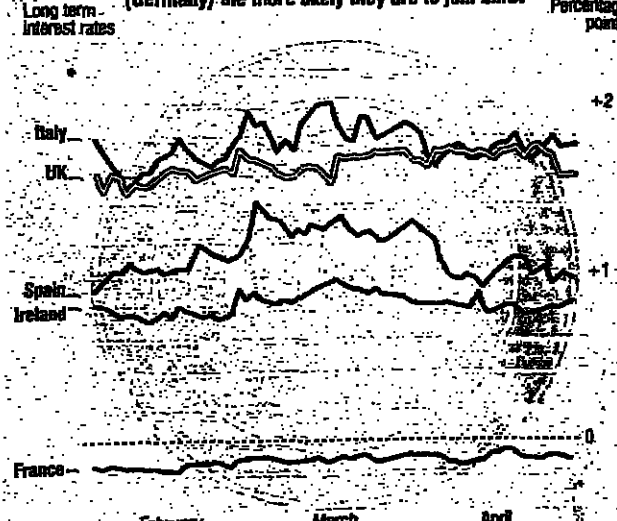
New Glaxo products allay patent fears

Analysts welcomed news that the drugs giant Glaxo Wellcome could have more than 20 new products under development by the end of this year. Glaxo, which has launched an offensive to allay fears about its best-selling Zantac anti-ulcer drug losing patent protection in July, said 10 new molecules had entered the development phase this year and it expected to more than double that in the full 12 months. James Nield, R&D director, said they were "well on track" to their objective of bringing three medicines a year to market from the year 2000. Analysts said this meant drugs that could generate annual sales of at least £500m.

Landslide fails to shake EMU

Who will be in EMU? The financial markets' view

The closer other countries get to the black dotted baseline (Germany) the more likely they are to join EMU.



TOWARDS EMU: If the line moves towards the German base line it means investors no longer require such a high premium for holding that country's bonds compared to German times, because they are confident the currency won't devalue against the Mark. In other words, they think that country will be locked into a single currency with Germany in ten years' time.

AWAY FROM EMU: However, if they think the country won't be in EMU, that it will have higher inflation, and that there is a risk of a future devaluation against the Mark, then they will demand an extra premium for holding that country's bonds, so the line will move away from the base.

When will EMU start? The City Analysts' View

The independent asked analysts from: Wilson Europe, Polina Wahler, ABN Amro, JP Morgan, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Salomon Brothers, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, Citicorp, Citibank, UBS.

What probability they placed on EMU starting on time.

Probability EMU starts on time	88%	(88% last week)
Probability EMU is delayed	24%	(22% last week)
Probability EMU never happens	8%	(9% last week)

Magnus Grimond

Labour's landslide victory in the British general election was largely shrugged aside yesterday by our panel of City economists delving into the prospects for economic and monetary union. Most said expectations of a Labour government had been factored in by the markets.

Julian Jessop of Nikko Europe said: "My gut feel is it doesn't matter because whoever won there would have to be a referendum on the project and the British public is still against it." Owen Hazode of James Capel said Labour's big majority probably increased the chances of the UK going in, possibly not in the first wave but immediately after. That should make gilts attractive against other government bonds, he suggested.

The travails of the suddenly weaker punt, which forced the Irish to raise their interest rates this week, were also largely discounted by our City scribblers. The problems of the currency highlighted the divergent pressures on countries struggling to meet the convergence criteria, while the devaluation of the currency took some of the pressure of the weak lira. But the economists suggested that the fate of the punt was largely peripheral to the main event.

By general agreement, a more important influence on the eventual outcome was the French election. While the enthusiasm of the French social-

ists for EMU matches that of the governing RPR coalition, like their social democratic counterparts in Germany, they are happier to accept a looser interpretation of the convergence criteria.

If this more liberal view prevailed, it would allow in more countries, which, according to Philip Chitty of ABN Amro Hoare Govett, would suit Lionel Jospin, leader of the socialists, as it would dilute the influence of the Germans. However, Alison Cottrell of Paine Webber, says Chancellor Kohl will be unable to accept the conditions attached to membership, threatening the whole project.

By contrast the Gauls are much nearer the Germans, being keener on a stricter interpretation of the criteria and a narrower inner core of initial members of the single currency.

How the balance of power between these two views works out once the votes are cast will clearly guide France's view of EMU as it goes into next year. The optimists are in the ascendant, believing that the ruling coalition will be returned again. In mid-May the Germans will publish their latest tax revenue figures, which will give clues as to how well the country is meeting the 3 per cent budget deficit target. On the May 25 comes the first round of French election. Any signs of the socialists doing well are likely to be taken as a bad omen for EMU by the markets.

Saatchi names chief executive

Cordiant, the advertising and marketing company that is poised to split into three, yesterday appointed Kevin Roberts as chief executive of its Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising Worldwide agency.

Mr Roberts, who will assume the role on 21 May, was chief operating officer of Lion Nathan, a New Zealand brewer, from 1989 until last November. Previously, he held management positions at PepsiCo, Procter & Gamble and Gillette.

He replaces Ed Wax, chairman and chief executive, who was expected to retire from the latter role this year. Mr Wax will remain chairman until the end of 1997

and then will stay with the agency as chairman emeritus.

Mr Roberts "has the blessings of Procter & Gamble, and whatever pleases them is good for Saatchi & Saatchi," said Lorna Tibbitt, an analyst with Panmure Gordon, Procter & Gamble, the world's biggest spender on advertising, is one of Saatchi's top clients.

Cordiant is planning to split into two publicly traded companies, Saatchi & Saatchi and Bates Worldwide, in an attempt to boost sales and profit. Shares in the companies, which will jointly own media-buying unit Zenith Media, will begin trading separately in December.

As chief executive of the

Saatchi agency, Mr Roberts will report to Cordiant's chief executive Bob Seelert.

Mr Seelert said that Mr Roberts' career "has exposed him to the key disciplines essential to our business: marketing and brand management for major multinationals, a hands-on experience of what good advertising can deliver and, above all, an entrepreneurial and energetic attitude to management."

Mr Roberts left Lion Nathan in November but remained a non-executive director at the company until February. While at Pepsi, he oversaw the company's Middle Eastern and Canadian operations. And at

Procter & Gamble, he was responsible for the Pampers, Tide, Ariel and Crest brands in the Middle East and Africa. He also owns a restaurant in Auckland and is a director of New Zealand Rugby Football Union.

However, he was not first choice to replace Mr Wax. The former heir apparent was John Fitzgerald, who quit as president of Saatchi & Saatchi Worldwide in August after he and Mr Wax concluded they had "differing views" on the agency's management.

One analyst said yesterday that another possible candidate for the job had been Jennifer Laing, the former head of the agency's London office.

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Foreign Exchange Rates as at 15/97

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	DOLLAR	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-MARK	Spot
US	1.6240	94	26.25	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	0.9375	0.9375
Canada	2.2627	61.56	170.162	1.3333	92.28	92.28	92.28	0.9125	0.9125
Germany	2.7000	70.43	207.198	1.7185	36.31	36.31	36.31	0.9375	0.9375
France	4.2274	224.21	675.941	9.8000	110.04	110.04	110.04	0.9375	0.9375
Italy	2.7781	26.45	71.24	1.7024	35.53	35.53	35.53	0.9375	0.9375
Japan	205.06	89.95	266.280	126.27	54.25	54.25	54.25	0.9375	0.9375
Spain	1.4919	24.40	72.46	1.1942	11.12	11.12	11.12	0.9375	0.9375
Belgium	2.7781	15.10	42.35	35.49	54.25	54.25	54.25	0.9375	0.9375
Denmark	16.821	250.90	710.400	6.5403	7.5	7.5	7.5	0.9375	0.9375
Netherlands	3.1408	85.77	246.232	1.5039	39.27	39.27	39.27	0.9375	0.9375
Sweden	1.0892	51	153	1.4824	54	54	54	0.9375	0.9375
Switzerland	1.5211	28.10	78.400	7.0928	30.25	30.25	30.25	0.9375	0.9375
Portugal	205.06	12.84	35.011	145.25	6.93	6.93	6.93	0.9375	0.9375
Greece	12.888	224.10	640.800	7.7198	41.48	41.48	41.48	0.9375	0.9375
Australia	2.3850	39.34	110.000	1.4560	45.46	45.46	45.46	0.9375	0.9375
South Africa	2.0892	24	144	1.2735	6.8	6.8	6.8	0.9375	0.9375
Hong Kong	12.888	224.10	640.800	7.7198	41.48	41.48	41.48	0.9375	0.9375
Malaysia	4.0709	0.0	0.0	1.6000	27.30	27.30	27.30	0.9375	0.9375
Thailand	2.3549	25.35	74.88	1.4000	1.4	1.4	1.4	0.9375	0.9375
India	8.0000	0.0	0.0	3.7500	8.5	8.5	8.5	0.9375	0.9375
Singapore	2.9472	0.0	0.0	1.4433	24.18	24.18	24.18	0.9375	0.9375

OTHER SPOT RATES as at 15/97

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.2920	Hong Kong	12.888
Brazil	1.9200	India	8.0000
Canada	1.2770	Italy	4.2274
China	13.4726	Japan	205.06
Denmark	1.5211	Malaysia	4.0709
France	4.2274	Portugal	2.0892
Germany	2.7000	Spain	1.4919
Greece	12.888	Sweden	1.0892
Hong Kong	12.888	Switzerland	1.5211
India	8.0000	Thailand	2.3549
Indonesia	1.5211	UK	1.0000
Italy	4.2274	USA	1.6240
Japan	205.06		
Malaysia	4.0709		
Portugal	2.0892		
Spain	1.4919		
Sweden	1.0892		
Switzerland	1.5211		
Thailand	2.3549		
UK	1.0000		
USA	1.6240		

Tourist Rates as at 15/97

Country	1 Day	7 Days	14 Days	21 Days	28 Days	35 Days	42 Days	49 Days	56 Days	63 Days	70 Days	77 Days	84 Days	91 Days	98 Days	105 Days	112 Days	119 Days	126 Days	133 Days	140 Days	147 Days	154 Days	161 Days	168 Days	175 Days	182 Days	189 Days	196 Days	203 Days	210 Days	217 Days	224 Days	231 Days	238 Days	245 Days	252 Days	259 Days	266 Days	273 Days	280 Days	287 Days	294 Days	301 Days	308 Days	315 Days	322 Days	329 Days	336 Days	343 Days	350 Days	357 Days	364 Days	371 Days	378 Days	385 Days	392 Days	399 Days	406 Days	413 Days	420 Days	427 Days	434 Days	441 Days	448 Days	455 Days	462 Days	469 Days	476 Days	483 Days	490 Days	497 Days	504 Days	511 Days	518 Days	525 Days	532 Days	539 Days	546 Days	553 Days	560 Days	567 Days	574 Days	581 Days	588 Days	595 Days	602 Days	609 Days	616 Days	623 Days	630 Days	637 Days	644 Days	651 Days	658 Days	665 Days	672 Days	679 Days	686 Days	693 Days	700 Days	707 Days	714 Days	721 Days	728 Days	735 Days	742 Days	749 Days	756 Days	763 Days	770 Days	777 Days	784 Days	791 Days	798 Days	805 Days	812 Days	819 Days	826 Days	833 Days	840 Days	847 Days	854 Days	861 Days	868 Days	875 Days	882 Days	889 Days	896 Days	903 Days	910 Days	917 Days	924 Days	931 Days	938 Days	945 Days	952 Days	959 Days	966 Days	973 Days	980 Days	987 Days	994 Days	1001 Days	1008 Days	1015 Days	1022 Days	1029 Days	1036 Days	1043 Days	1050 Days	1057 Days	1064 Days	1071 Days	1078 Days	1085 Days	1092 Days	1099 Days	1106 Days	1113 Days	1120 Days	1127 Days	1134 Days	1141 Days	1148 Days	1155 Days	1162 Days	1169 Days	1176 Days	1183 Days	1190 Days	1197 Days	1204 Days	1211 Days	1218 Days	1225 Days	1232 Days	1239 Days	1246 Days	1253 Days	1260 Days	1267 Days	1274 Days	1281 Days	1288 Days	1295 Days	1302 Days	1309 Days	1316 Days	1323 Days	1330 Days	1337 Days	1344 Days	1351 Days	1358 Days	1365 Days	1372 Days	1379 Days	1386 Days	1393 Days	1400 Days	1407 Days	1414 Days	1421 Days	1428 Days	1435 Days	1442 Days	1449 Days	1456 Days	1463 Days	1470 Days	1477 Days	1484 Days	1491 Days	1498 Days	1505 Days	1512 Days	1519 Days	1526 Days	1533 Days	1540 Days	1547 Days	1554 Days	1561 Days	1568 Days	1575 Days	1582 Days	1589 Days	1596 Days	1603 Days	1610 Days	1617 Days	1624 Days	1631 Days	1638 Days	1645 Days	1652 Days	1659 Days	1666 Days	1673 Days	1680 Days	1687 Days	1694 Days	1701 Days	1708 Days	1715 Days	1722 Days	1729 Days	1736 Days	1743 Days	1750 Days	1757 Days	1764 Days	1771 Days	1778 Days	1785 Days	1792 Days	1799 Days	1806 Days	1813 Days	1820 Days	1827 Days	1834 Days	1841 Days	1848 Days	1855 Days	1862 Days	1869 Days	1876 Days	1883 Days	1890 Days	1897 Days	1904 Days	1911 Days	1918 Days	1925 Days	1932 Days	1939 Days	1946 Days	1953 Days	1960 Days	1967 Days	1974 Days	1981 Days	1988 Days	1995 Days	2002 Days	2009 Days	2016 Days	2023 Days	2030 Days	2037 Days	2044 Days	2051 Days	2058 Days	2065 Days	2072 Days	2079 Days	2086 Days	2093 Days	2100 Days	2107 Days	2114 Days	2121 Days	2128 Days	2135 Days	2142 Days	2149 Days	2156 Days	2163 Days	2170 Days	2177 Days	2184 Days	2191 Days	2198 Days	2205 Days	2212 Days	2219 Days	2226 Days	2233 Days	2240 Days	2247 Days	2254 Days	2261 Days	2268 Days	2275 Days	2282 Days	2289 Days	2296 Days	2303 Days	2310 Days	2317 Days	2324 Days	2331 Days	2338 Days	2345 Days	2352 Days	2359 Days	2366 Days	2373 Days	2380 Days	2387 Days	2394 Days	2401 Days	2408 Days	2415 Days	2422 Days	2429 Days	2436 Days	2443 Days	2450 Days	2457 Days	2464 Days	2471 Days	2478 Days	2485 Days	2492 Days	2499 Days	2506 Days	2513 Days	2520 Days	2527 Days	2534 Days	2541 Days	2548 Days	2555 Days	2562 Days	2569 Days	2576 Days	2583 Days	2590 Days	2597 Days	2604 Days	2611 Days	2618 Days	2625 Days	2632 Days	2639 Days	2646 Days	2653 Days	2660 Days	2667 Days	2674 Days	2681 Days	2688 Days	2695 Days	2702 Days	2709 Days	2716 Days	2723 Days	2730 Days	2737 Days	2744 Days	2751 Days	2758 Days	2765 Days	2772 Days	2779 Days	2786 Days	2793 Days	2800 Days	2807 Days	2814 Days	2821 Days	2828 Days	2835 Days	2842 Days	2849 Days	2856 Days	2863 Days	2870 Days	2877 Days	2884 Days	2891 Days	2898 Days	2905 Days	2912 Days	2919 Days	2926 Days	2933 Days	2940 Days	2947 Days	2954 Days	2961 Days	2968 Days	2975 Days	2982 Days	2989 Days	2996 Days	3003 Days	3010 Days	3017 Days	3024 Days	3031 Days	3038 Days	3045 Days	3052 Days	3059 Days	3066 Days	3073 Days	3080 Days	3087 Days	3094 Days	3101 Days	3108 Days	3115 Days	3122 Days	3129 Days	3136 Days	3143 Days	3150 Days	3157 Days	3164 Days	3171 Days	3178 Days	3185 Days	3192 Days	3199 Days	3206 Days	3213 Days	3220 Days	3227 Days	3234 Days	3241 Days	3248 Days	3255 Days	3262 Days	3269 Days	3276 Days	3283 Days	3290 Days	3297 Days	3304 Days	3311 Days	3318 Days	3325 Days	3332 Days	3339 Days	3346 Days	3353 Days	3360 Days	3367 Days	3374 Days	3381 Days	3388 Days	3395 Days	3402 Days	3409 Days	3416 Days	3423 Days	3430 Days	3437 Days	3444 Days	3451 Days	3458 Days	3465 Days	3472 Days	3479 Days	3486 Days	3493 Days	3500 Days	3507 Days	3514 Days	3521 Days	3528 Days	3535 Days	3542 Days	3549 Days	3556 Days	3563 Days	3570 Days	3577 Days	3584 Days	3591 Days	3598 Days	3605 Days	3612 Days	3619 Days	3626 Days	3633 Days	3640 Days	3647 Days	3654 Days	3661 Days	3668 Days	3675 Days	3682 Days	3689 Days	3696 Days	3703 Days	3710 Days	3717 Days	3724 Days	3731 Days	3738 Days	3745 Days	3752 Days	3759 Days	3766 Days	3773 Days	3780 Days	3787 Days	3794 Days	3801 Days	3808 Days	3815 Days	3822 Days	3829 Days	3836 Days	3843 Days	3850 Days	3857 Days	3864 Days	3871 Days	3878 Days	3885 Days	3892 Days	3899 Days	3906 Days	3913 Days	3920 Days	3927 Days	3934 Days	3941 Days	3948 Days	3955 Days	3962 Days	3969 Days	3976 Days	3983 Days	3990 Days	3997 Days	4004 Days	4011 Days	4018 Days	4025 Days	4032 Days	4039 Days	4046 Days	4053 Days	4060 Days	4067 Days	4074 Days	4081 Days	4088 Days	4095 Days	4102 Days	4109 Days	4116 Days	4123 Days	4130 Days	4137 Days	4144 Days	4151 Days	4158 Days	4165 Days	4172 Days	4179 Days	4186 Days	4193 Days	4200 Days	4207 Days	4214 Days	4221 Days	4228 Days	4235 Days	4242 Days	4249 Days	4256 Days	4263 Days	4270 Days	4277 Days	4284 Days	4291 Days	4298 Days	4305 Days	4312 Days	4319 Days	4326 Days	4333 Days	4340 Days	4347 Days	4354 Days	4361 Days	4368 Days	4375 Days	4382 Days	4389 Days	4396 Days	4403 Days	4410 Days	4417 Days	4424 Days	4431 Days	4438 Days	4445 Days	4452 Days	4459 Days	4466 Days	4473 Days	4480 Days	4487 Days	4494 Days	4501 Days	4508 Days	4515 Days	4522 Days	4529 Days	4536 Days	4543 Days	4550 Days	4557 Days	4564 Days	4571 Days	4578 Days	4585 Days	4592 Days	4599 Days	4606 Days	4613 Days	4620 Days	4627 Days	4634 Days	4641 Days	4648 Days	4655 Days	4662 Days	4669 Days	4676 Days	4683 Days	4690 Days	4697 Days	4704 Days	4711 Days	4718 Days	4725 Days	4732 Days	4739 Days	4746 Days	4753 Days	4760 Days	4767 Days	4774 Days	4781 Days	4788 Days	4795 Days	4802 Days	4809 Days	4816 Days	4823 Days	4830 Days	4837 Days	4844 Days	4851 Days	4858 Days	4865 Days	4872 Days	4879 Days	4886 Days	4893 Days	4900 Days	4907 Days	4914 Days	4921 Days	4928 Days	4935 Days	4942 Days	4949 Days	4956 Days	4963 Days	4970 Days	4977 Days	4984 Days	4991 Days	4998 Days	5005 Days	5012 Days	5019 Days	5026 Days	5033 Days	5040 Days	5047 Days	5054 Days	5061 Days	5068 Days	5075 Days	5082 Days	5089 Days	5096 Days	5103 Days	5110 Days	5117 Days	5124 Days	5131 Days	5138 Days	5145 Days	5152 Days	5159 Days	5166 Days	5173 Days	5180 Days	5187 Days	5194 Days	5201 Days	5208 Days	5215 Days	5222 Days	5229 Days	5236 Days	5243 Days	5250 Days	5257 Days	5264 Days	5271 Days	5278 Days	5285 Days	5292 Days	5299 Days	5306 Days	5313 Days	5320 Days	5327 Days	5334 Days	5341 Days	5348 Days	5355 Days	5362 Days	5369 Days	5376 Days	5383 Days	5390 Days	5397 Days	5404 Days	5411 Days	5418 Days	5425 Days	5432 Days	5439 Days	5446 Days	5453 Days	5460 Days	5467 Days	5474 Days	5481 Days	5488 Days	5495 Days	5502 Days	5509 Days	5516 Days	5523 Days	5530 Days	5537 Days	5544 Days	5551 Days	5558 Days	5565 Days	5572 Days	5579 Days	5586 Days	5593 Days	5600 Days	5607 Days	5614 Days	5621 Days	5628 Days	5635 Days	5642 Days	5649 Days	5656 Days	5663 Days	5670 Days	5677 Days	5684 Days	5691 Days	5698 Days	5705 Days	5712 Days	5719 Days	5726 Days	5733 Days	5740 Days	5747 Days	5754 Days	5761 Days	5768 Days	5775 Days	5782 Days	5789 Days	5796 Days	5803 Days	5810 Days	5817 Days	5824 Days	5831 Days	5838 Days	5845 Days	5852 Days	5859 Days	5866 Days	5873 Days	5880 Days	5887 Days	5894 Days	5901 Days	5908 Days	5915 Days	5922 Days	5929 Days	5936 Days	5943 Days	5950 Days	5957 Days	5964 Days	5971 Days	5978 Days	5985 Days	5992 Days	5999 Days	6006 Days	6013 Days	6020 Days	6027 Days	6034 Days	6041 Days	6048 Days	6055 Days	6062 Days	6069 Days	6076 Days	6083 Days	6090 Days	6097 Days	6104 Days	6111 Days	6118 Days	6125 Days	6132 Days	6139 Days	6146 Days	6153 Days	6160 Days	6167 Days	6174 Days	6181 Days	6188 Days	6195 Days	6202 Days	6209 Days	6216 Days	6223 Days	6230 Days	6237 Days	6244 Days	6251 Days	6258 Days	6265 Days	6272 Days	6279 Days	6286 Days	6293 Days	6300 Days	6307 Days	6314 Days	6321 Days	6328 Days	6335 Days	6342 Days	6349 Days	6356 Days	6363 Days	6370 Days	6377 Days	6384 Days	6391 Days	6398 Days	6405 Days	6412 Days	6419 Days	6426 Days	6433 Days	6440 Days	6447 Days	6454 Days	6461 Days	6468 Days	6475 Days	6482 Days	6489 Days	6496 Days	6503 Days	6510 Days	6517 Days	6524 Days	6531 Days	6538 Days	6545 Days	6552 Days	6559 Days	6566 Days	6573 Days	6580 Days	6587 Days	6594 Days	6601 Days	6608 Days	6615 Days	6622 Days	6629 Days	6636 Days	6643 Days	6650 Days	6657 Days	6664 Days	6671 Days	6678 Days	6685 Days	6692 Days	6699 Days	6706 Days	6713 Days	6720 Days	6727 Days	6734 Days	6741 Days	6748 Days	6755 Days	6762 Days	6769 Days	6776 Days	6783 Days	6790 Days	6797 Days	6804 Days	6811 Days	6818 Days	6825 Days	6832 Days	6839 Days	6846 Days	6853 Days	6860 Days	6867 Days	6874 Days	6881 Days	6888 Days	6895 Days	6902 Days	6909 Days	6916 Days	6923 Days	6930 Days	6937 Days	6944 Days	6951 Days	6958 Days	6965 Days	6972 Days	6979 Days	6986 Days	6993 Days	7000 Days	7007 Days	7014 Days	7021 Days	7028 Days	7035 Days	7042 Days	7049 Days	7056 Days	7063 Days	7070 Days	7077 Days	7084 Days	7091 Days	7098 Days	7105 Days	7112 Days	7119 Days	7126 Days	7133 Days	7140 Days	7147 Days	7154 Days	7161 Days	7168 Days	7175 Days	7182 Days	7189 Days	7196 Days	7203 Days	7210 Days	7217 Days	7224 Days	7231 Days	7238 Days	7245 Days	7252 Days	7259 Days	7266 Days	7273 Days	7280 Days	7287 Days	7294 Days	7301 Days	7308 Days	7315 Days	7322 Days	7329 Days	7336 Days	7343 Days	7350 Days	7357 Days	7364 Days	7371 Days	7378 Days	7385 Days	7392 Days	7399 Days	7406 Days	7413 Days	7420 Days	7427 Days	7434 Days	7441 Days	7448 Days	7455 Days	7462 Days	7469 Days	7476 Days	7483 Days	7490 Days	7497 Days	7504 Days	7511 Days	7518 Days	7525 Days	7532 Days	7539 Days	7546 Days	7553 Days	7560 Days	7567 Days	7574 Days	7581 Days	7588 Days	7595 Days	7602 Days	7609 Days	7616 Days	7623 Days	7630 Days	7637 Days	7644 Days	7651 Days	7658 Days	7665 Days	7672 Days	7679 Days	7686 Days	7693 Days	7700 Days	7707 Days	7714 Days	7721 Days	7728 Days	7735 Days	7742 Days	7749 Days	7756 Days	7763 Days	7770 Days	7777 Days	7784 Days	7791 Days	7798 Days	7805 Days	7812 Days	7819 Days	7826 Days	7833 Days	7840 Days	7847 Days	7854 Days	7861 Days	7868 Days	7875 Days	7882 Days	7889 Days	7896 Days	7903 Days	7910 Days	7917 Days	7924 Days	7931 Days	7938 Days	7945 Days	7952 Days	7959 Days	7966 Days	7973 Days	7980 Days	7987 Days	7994 Days	8001 Days	8008 Days	8015 Days	8022 Days	8029 Days	8036 Days	8043 Days	8050 Days	8057 Days	8064 Days	8071 Days	8078 Days	8085 Days	8092 Days	8099 Days	8106 Days	8113 Days	8120 Days	8127 Days	8134 Days	8141 Days	8148 Days	8155 Days	8162 Days	8169 Days	8176 Days	8183 Days	8190 Days	8197 Days	8204 Days	8211 Days	8218 Days	8225 Days	8232 Days	8239 Days	8246 Days	8253 Days	8260 Days	8267 Days	8274 Days	8281 Days	8288 Days	8295 Days	8302 Days	8309 Days	8316 Days	8323 Days	8330 Days	8337 Days	8344 Days	8351 Days	8358 Days	8365 Days	8372 Days	8379 Days	8386 Days	8393 Days	8400 Days	8407 Days	8414 Days	8421 Days	8428 Days	8435 Days	8442 Days	8449 Days	8456 Days	8463 Days	8470 Days	8477 Days	8484 Days	8491 Days	8498 Days	8505 Days	8512 Days	8519 Days	8526 Days	8533 Days	8540 Days	8547 Days	8554 Days	8561 Days	8568 Days	8575 Days	8582 Days	8589 Days	8596 Days	8603 Days	8610 Days	8617 Days	8624 Days	8631 Days	8638 Days	8645 Days	8652 Days	8659 Days	8666 Days	8673 Days	8680 Days	8687 Days	8694 Days	8701 Days	8708 Days	8715 Days	8722 Days	8729 Days	8736 Days	8743 Days	8750 Days	8757 Days	8764 Days	87
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TODAY'S TELEVISION

Gerard Gilbert recommends *Sleaze, Wives and Videotape* Sun 6.30pm C5

The makers of that definitively awful soap *Triangle* – the one starring Kate O'Mara and set aboard a North Sea ferry – got it all wrong. *Triangle* should never have been a soap in the first place. *Ferry Tales* (Sun CS), a new documentary series about life on board the Brittany Ferries fleet, proves what any regular ferry passenger would have told them. The material is pure comedy.

One could start with the on-board entertainment, where eager ingenues rub shoulders with the white-haired and defeated. "Here I am, still at the bottom, working the ferries," says Saxon (or was it Sazo or Sugsie? I couldn't quite make it out despite several rewinds), as he prepares to run his magic act past a scattering of bleary-eyed toddlers and their mothers. Meanwhile, another youngster has left part of his scalp on the playroom ceiling, and, below decks, an engine has to be shut

down. Add drunks (the bar apparently takes £20,000 on a good crossing), stumpy truckers and an air-sea rescue practice, and suddenly *MV Normandie*'s best hour of television from Portsmouth to Caen looks like rich territory for a Ben Elton or an Andy Hamilton.

From the potentially ridiculous to the sublimely awful, this year's Eurovision Song Contest (Sat BBC1) apparently contains the United Kingdom's best chance of winning since Bucks Fizz in 1981 (remember the skirt-ripping finale?). Hitherto one-hit wonders Katrina and the Waves ("Walking on Sunshine") represent us with a song originally written to celebrate the Samaritans' 30th birthday. The charity apparently turned it down for being too up-tempo. Let's hope the Bosnians and Estonians like it, although Eurovision usually confirms one in the suspicion that no one really likes the British.

Dr John Collee used to write an entertaining medical column for the *Observer*, which suggests he might have penned an amusing swipe at the excesses of the organ transplant industry rather than the silly drama *The Heart Surgeon* (Sun BBC1). This is another of those screenplays in which successful middle-aged professionals embark on passionate roller-coaster romances with pretty young women – and which seem to give commissioning editors such vicarious pleasure.

David Niven-soundalike Nigel Havers – acting's equivalent of a Holiday Inn: you know exactly what you are going to get and he never fails to disappoint – plays the egomaniacal cardiac mechanic, a dapper smoothie with the aspirational lifestyle of a shaving-foam advert (designer pad in London; weekends on his Shropshire hill farm where he spends evenings in front of a log fire, playing guitar with his head shepherd. As you

do. Havers then beds the shepherd's wife, the shepherd gets angina and... oh please, don't make me go on.

Wanted returns (Sun C4) – without Richard Littlejohn and the former KGB operator Oleg Gordievsky, and with ex-MTV presenter Ray Cokes (I don't know, ask a teenager). Having failed to enlist sufficient support from the British public to snitch on the runners last time, Channel 4 has introduced naked market forces. A positive sighting which leads directly to a "capture" will win viewers £1,000. "Can runners trust their friends and family this time?" asks the PT blurb. Nasty – but probably not as nasty as life down in Tartan during the past six weeks. *Sleaze, Wives and Videotape* (Sun C5) brings us the inside story on the battle for the Cheshire constituency between Neil Hamilton and white-suited former BBC reporter, Martin Bell. With "straight" material like this, who needs satire?

BBC 1

7.00 *Harry and the Hendersons* (R/S) (7/19015932).
7.25 *News, Weather* (2370512).
7.30 *Children's BBC: Felix the Cat* 7.45 Babar, 8.10 Albert the 5th Musketeer, 8.35 The Flintstones, 9.00 Phantom 2040, 9.20 The Incredible Hulk, 9.45 Grange Hill, 10.15 Sweet Valley High.
10.40 *The O Zone*. Gary Barlow discusses his solo career, by way of plugging his new single (S) (4064357).
11.00 *Enchanted Tales* (R/S) (4281445).
11.50 *The Pink Panther Show* (6149767).
12.12 *Weather* (8684661).
12.15 *Grandstand*. 1.00 *News* (85022390). 1.05 *Racing from Haydock*: the 1.10 race (82063725). 1.20 *World Championship Snooker*. Coverage of the semi-finals from Sheffield (28176690). 1.35 *Racing from Haydock*: the 1.40 race (86006951). 1.50 *Rugby League: a look ahead to this afternoon's Challenge Cup final between St Helens and Bradford Bulls* (86094116). 2.00 *Racing from Haydock*: the 2.10 race (93145715). 2.20 *Rugby League: Live coverage from Wembley of the Silk Cut Challenge Cup final between St Helens and Bradford Bulls*. With commentary from Ray French (28202574). 4.40 *Final Score* (1726048).
5.15 *News, Weather* (7/4831970).
5.25 *Local News, Weather* (5268425).
5.35 *Match of the Day*. Manchester United vs Leicester City is the main event (S) (7/201680).
6.10 *The New Adventures of Superman* (S) (7/811116).
6.55 *Whitney Houston: Want. Gaby'll fix it* (S) (7/638970).
7.45 *The National Lottery Live*. Comeback kids ABC perform their new single (S) (342845).
8.00 *The Eurovision Song Contest 97*. Boyzone's Ronan Keating and RTÉ's Carrie Crowley introduce the 25 contenders from Dublin. See Preview, above (S) (542319).
11.00 *News, Weather* (7/7067).
11.30 *Match of the Day*. Highlights of Liverpool vs Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal vs Newcastle (S) (865067).
12.20 *They Think It's All Over*. Stephen Fry reads (R/S) (2956433).
12.50 *Top of the Pops*. Robbie Williams, Shola Ama, Kenickie, D-Ream and Republica play live. Cathy Dennis presents (R/S) (5038094).
1.25 *Why Would I Lie?* (Larry Pearce 1980 US). Silly comedy with lazy anti-feminist sentiments. Treat Williams plays a compulsive liar who inherits a fortune. Would you buy a pitch like that? (320452).
3.05 *Weather* (78714520). To 3.10am. *Regions*. Scott 5.35 *Cartoon*. 5.40 *Sportszone – Match of the Day*. 11.30 *Sportszone – Match of the Day*. 12.20 *Stinty*. 12.40 *They Think It's All Over*. 1.10 *Top of the Pops*. 1.45 *Weather*.

BBC 2

6.20 *Open University: The Three Esaltis* (8789319). 6.45 *Elements Discovered* (8265390). 7.10 *The Birth of Modern Geometry* (9037154). 7.35 *Ways with Words* (8375116).
8.00 *Open Saturday* (S) (841932).
10.30 *World Championship Snooker*. First visit of the day to the Crucible in Sheffield (S) (63226425).
12.15 *Film 97 with Barry Norman* (R/S) (7/801131).
12.45 *The 39 Steps* (Alfred Hitchcock 1935 UK). John Buchan's potboiler turned into a memorable movie – one of Hitchcock's finest. In a plot later to be largely recycled in *North by Northwest*, Robert Donat plays an innocent man accused of murder and finding himself handcuffed to Madeleine Carroll as they are chased by the police and a spy ring in the general direction of Scotland. Goodie! Teale, Peggy Ashcroft and John Laurie co-star (T) (503425).
2.10 *Hitchcock on Hitchcock*. In this 1962 Monitor interview with Huw Weldon, Alfred Hitchcock talks about himself, his career and the techniques that made him famous (R) (7/9312422).
2.30 *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (Alfred Hitchcock 1956 US). Doris Day sings "Que Sera, Sera" and the Technicolor is gorgeous, but Hitchcock's American remake of his 1934 British thriller is largely disappointing stodge. Directors are never very successful at repeating their old films. James Stewart is the man who learns too much about an assassination attempt (14897970).
4.25 *The Saint*. The Loch Ness monster is under suspicion following a spate of hideous murders. Oh yes (2384154).
5.15 *World Championship Snooker*. David Vine introduces continued coverage from Sheffield (S) (653086).
6.15 *Nation Goes to the Polls*. An intimate record of what really happened on election day, from the views of 50 very different people (S) (667222).
7.05 *News, Sport, Weather* (7/209406).
7.20 *Newsnight Special*. Jeremy Paxman looks back at the election (S) (781796).
8.05 *World Championship Snooker*. Continued coverage (S) (679574).
9.00 *Yes Minister*. A post-election episode of the excellent 1980s sitcom, featuring a leadership election and a Euro-sausage scandal (R) (2226).
10.00 *World Championship Snooker*. Return to the Crucible (S) (105690).
10.40 *Close Up on Hitchcock*. Sean Connery recalls working with Alfred Hitchcock on *Marnie* (S) (817203).
10.50 *Marnie* (Alfred Hitchcock 1964 US). Opinions are wildly varied on Hitchcock's stab at Freudian melodrama, but no one can doubt the extraordinary performance he brought out of Tippi Hedren, the actress he discovered and lusted after (this and *The Birds* were his only bewails of adult life). Hedren plays the flighty kleptomaniac of the title, while an out-of-control Sean Connery plays the wealthy publisher attempting to cure her on both counts (T) (31372241).
12.55 *Later with Jools Holland*. With ZZ Top, the Bluestones, Stereolab, Nigel Kennedy and Altan. Plus a rare appearance from Bo Diddley and Scottish blues guitarist Bert Jansch (R/S) (5404655). To 2.10am.

ITV/Carlton

6.00 *GMTV*. 6.00 *News*. 6.10 *Professor Bubble*. 6.30 *Bananas in Pyjamas*. 6.50 *Our House*. 7.10 *The Wuzzles*. 7.40 *Donna's Wake Up in the Wild Room*. 8.55 *Power Rangers Leo* (4083086).
9.25 *Mashed*. Live Saturday morning entertainment (S) (71249135).
11.30 *The Chart Show* (S) (76680).
12.30 *The Making of "Liar Liar"* (581116).
1.00 *News, Weather* (7/85700).
1.05 *London Weekend Today* (85056357).
1.10 *Cartoon Time* (10071226).
1.25 *Alvin and the Chipmunks* (S) (7624574).
2.20 *SeaQuest DSV* (S) (7/624574).
3.15 *Carry On Sergeant* (Gerald Thomas 1959 UK). The very first Carry On – and it's hard to spot any of the ingredients which would go on to make up the most successful comedy series in British cinema. William Hartnell is the sergeant hoping to create a formidable platoon from inept national servicemen. Bob Monkhouse, Eric Barker and Sid James (967951).
4.45 *News, Sport, Weather* (7/1107661).
5.05 *London Weekend Tonight* (8579796).
5.20 *Cartoon Time* (5254222).
5.30 *New Baywatch* (S) (7/404680).
6.20 *Barymore* (S) (7/301154).
7.15 *Stars in Their Eyes*. Otis Redding, Debbie Harry and country singer Garth Brooks are impersonated (S) (789509).
8.00 *A Touch of Frost*. Four years for David Jason's gruff, old-style copper. A man with Down's syndrome is suspected of murder (R/S) (7/1512).
10.00 *News, Weather, Lottery Result* (7/428845).
10.15 *The Running Man* (Paul Michael Glasser 1987 US). Futuristic mayhem, adapted from a Stephen King novel, set in a time when convicted criminals are offered liberty in return for taking part in a gladiatorial-type television game show. Arnold Schwarzenegger plays a wrongly convicted helicopter pilot who decides to come on down (S) (7/46777).
12.00 *Donor* (Larry Shaw 1990 US). Melissa Gilbert-Brinkman suspects a hospital of illegal body-parts surgery in this small-screen *Caroline-in-the-land* (505477).
1.45 *Club Nation* (R/S) (7/42988).
2.45 *Dating the Enemy* (R/S) (166568).
3.45 *Della* (Robert Gest 1965 US). Joan Crawford keeps her daughter prisoner in a mansion (5368100).
4.50 *Night Shift* (64997810). To 5.00am.

Channel 4

6.45 *Miraculous Mellipops* (R) (8290086).
7.10 *The Adventures of Sonic the Hedgehog* (R) (9022222).
7.35 *Crazy Crawlers* (S) (7/8395121).
8.00 *Transworld Sport* (53406).
9.00 *Morning Line* (S) (20593).
10.00 *Gazzetta Football Italia* (38339).
11.00 *NBA 24/7* (S) (85845).
12.00 *Rawhide* (68593).
1.00 *Next To No Time* (Henry Cornelius 1958 UK). Comedy reuniting Kenneth More with Genevieve director Cornelius. More plays a brilliant scientist attempting to persuade industrialist Roland Oliver to invest in his new project during a crossing to New York on the QE2 (67448932).
2.40 *Channel 4 Racing*. Brough Scott introduces a four-race card from Newmarket: the 3.00, 3.40, 4.15 and 4.50 races (S) (75455715).
5.05 *Brookside Omnibus* (S) (7/7214593).
6.30 *Right to Reply* (S) (7/19).
7.00 *A Week in Politics* (S) (9390).
8.00 *The Enemy Below* (Dick Powell 1957 US). Former crooner and film noir leading man Dick Powell helmed this exciting movie capturing the German mouse war games between a German U-boat and a US destroyer. Curt Jurgens and Robert Mitchum are the respective captains (T) (49283222).
9.45 *Bremner, Bird and Fortune: Three Men and a Vote*. Rory Bremner, John Bird and John Fortune look back at the election campaign and forward to the new government (972488).
10.35 *Homicide: Life on the Street* (6489701).
11.35 *Hill Street Blues* (R) (874628).
12.30 *Trust Me* (Bobby Houston 1989 US). Adam Ant plays a desperate painter who decides to promote a painter and then kill him – thus cashing in on the dead man's fame (781988).
2.25 *Deadness*. TV. Guests are Mark Morris and Pam Grier (R/S) (764307).
3.00 *Rock of the North*. Robert Palmer profiled (65655).
4.00 *The Real World* (S) (93907).
4.30 *One for the Road* (R) (7225988).
4.55 *Let the Blood Run Free* (7222075).
5.25 *Strange Bird* (5020655). To 5.40am.
5.40 *NBA 24/7* (R/S) (2431181). To 6.35am.

Channel 5

6.00 *Daggle Down Farm* (2815932).
6.30 *Attractions* (R/S) (7410241).
7.00 *5 News Early* (S) (5965628).
7.30 *Havakazoo: Wimpie's House* (5944135).
8.00 *Alvin and the Chipmunks* (8894357).
8.30 *Land of the Lost* (8893628).
9.00 *Beverly Hills*, 90210 (7/12714135).
10.50 *Mag Upfront: Anything's Possible*. Young actors re-enact childhood traumas and embarrassing moments suffered by celebrities, with Katie Puckrick (S) (88227864).
11.00 *Turnstyle*. Gail McKenna and Dominik Diamond report on the weekend's top sporting clashes (S) (59345067).
12.50 *5 News* (S) (15658048).
1.00 *The Mag*. Josie D'Arby introduces the afternoon entertainment slot for young people, featuring news, reviews, gossip, fashion and comedy (S) (45964390).
2.00 *USA High*. Teenage sitcom about the students of an American school in Paris. Christian gets a "D" on his American History exam (S) (38293845).
2.20 *The Mag* (Continued). (S) (6797661).
3.15 *Sunset Beach Omnibus* (18252796).
6.00 *5 News and Sport* (S) (1111154).
6.05 *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*. Our strapping demi-god attends the wedding of his friend Penelope, only for Nemesis the Centaur to crash the party and kidnap the bride (3859591).
6.55 *Night Fever*. Karaoke entertainment show in which male celebrities take on their female counterparts in a battle of musical knowledge, singing and dancing (S) (6296222).
7.50 *5 News and Sport* (S) (3452932).
8.10 *JAG*. Adventure series about a Navy lawyer who travels around the world investigating military cases. A soldier guarding the American embassy in Lima is accused of shooting an innocent teenager playing on the embassy wall. The soldier claims he fired in self-defence (7539932).
9.00 *Halifax FF*. Drama series about Australian forensic psychiatrist Jane Halifax. A serial killer with a macabre line in makeovers is striking fear into the hearts of women (S) (7/1461357).
11.00 *At Close Range* (James Foley 1985 US). Sean Penn discovers his estranged father, Christopher Walken, is a backwoods outlaw. At first impressed, Penn comes to realise papa is a murderer and rapist and decides to blow the whistle (46646816).
1.15 *Prime Target* (Robert Collins 1989 US). Made-for-TV thriller in which homicide detective Anne Dickinson is assigned to investigate the killings of policemen and begins to suspect that the serial killer might be a policeman (9745355).
2.50 *Deadman's Curve* (Richard Compton 1972 US). Dramatisation of the rise to stardom of 1960s singing duo Jan and Dean, who immortalised California's surfing sound. Their career came to a sudden halt when Jan was crippled in a car accident (6622891).
4.30 *The Road*. The country and western music scene (S) (87094617).
4.40 *Prisoner Cell Block H* (4468433).
5.30 *Whistle* (R/S) (2716617). To 6.00am.

ITV/Regions

ANGLIA
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies*, Games and Videos (581116). 1.05 *Anglia News and Weather* (85056357). 1.10 *Anglia* (7810241). 2.10 *Film: The Reluctant Agent* (611154). 3.45 *seasQuest DSV* (889333). 5.05 *Anglia News, Sport and Weather* (8579796). 12.00 *Film: Swing Shift* (860636). 1.50 *Film: Hot Pursuit* (860636). 3.30 *Helter Skelter* (2942365). 4.20 *Sound Bites* (63774297). 4.30 - 5.30am *Shift* (80452).

CENTRAL
As London except: 12.30pm *Premiere* (581116). 1.05 *Central News and Weather* (85056357). 1.10 *Central* (7810241). 2.10 *Film: Van Ryan's Express* (65105154). 3.50 *seasQuest DSV* (889333). 5.00 *Central News and Weather* (8579796). 5.05 *Central Match – Goals Extra* (8579796). 3.45 *Sound Bites* (601471). 5.20 - 5.30am *Asian Eye* (8339907).

ITV WALES
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies*, Games and Videos (581116). 1.05 *ITV News* (85056357). 1.10 *Film: Crystalline* (8685680). 2.55 *seasQuest DSV* (7345661). 3.50 *ITV News* (8579796). 5.05 *ITV News* (8579796). 12.00 *Film: Swing Shift* (860636). 1.50 *Film: Hot Pursuit* (860636). 3.30 *Helter Skelter* (2942365). 4.20 *Sound Bites* (63774297). 4.30 - 5.30am *Shift* (80452).

ITV WEST
As ITV Wales except: 1.05pm *ITV News Update* (85056357). 1.10 *Sportsworld* (641377). 1.45 *The Matthew* (5594425). 2.20 *seasQuest DSV* (724574). 3.15 *ITV News* (8579796). 4.10 *The List* (7129512). 5.05 - 5.20pm *ITV West News, Sports Results and Weather* (8579796).

MERIDIAN
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies*, Games and Videos (581116). 1.05 *Meridian News and Weather* (85056357). 1.10 *Meridian* (22670951). 1.40 *The Road Show* (40198777). 2.10 *Film: Johnny Tremain* (611154). 3.45 *seasQuest DSV* (889333). 5.05 *Meridian News and Weather* (8579796). 12.00 *Film: Swing Shift* (860636). 1.50 *Film: Hot Pursuit* (860636). 3.30 *Helter Skelter* (2942365). 4.20 *Sound Bites* (63774297). 4.30 - 5.30am *Shift* (80452).

WESTCOUNTRY
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies*, Games and Videos (581116). 1.05 *Westcountry News* (85056357). 1.10 *Film: Mutiny on the Buses* (67464970). 2.50 *ITV News* (8579796). 3.50 *seasQuest DSV* (889333). 5.05 *Westcountry News* (8579796). 12.00 *Film: Swing Shift* (860636). 1.50 *Film: Hot Pursuit* (860636). 3.30 *Helter Skelter* (2942365). 4.20 *Sound Bites* (63774297). 4.30 - 5.30am *Shift* (80452).

YORKSHIRE
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies*, Games and Videos (581116). 1.05 *Yorkshire News and Weather* (85056357). 1.10 *Yorkshire* (2895135). 2.05 *Film: Star's Nights* (714660). 3.50 *seasQuest DSV* (889333). 5.05 *Yorkshire News and Weather* (8579796). 5.10 *Scoreline* (4834067). 12.00 *Film: Swing Shift* (860636). 1.50 *Bed with Meddler* (6716717). 2.20 *Film: Futureworld* (378810). 4.30 *Collins and Maschino's Movie Club* (5581642). 4.40 - 5.30am *Murder, She Wrote* (2651355).

CHANNEL 3 NORTH EAST
As Yorkshire except: 1.05pm *North East News* (85056357). 5.05 *North East News* (85056357). 5.10 - 5.20pm *Full Time* (4834067).

SAC
As C4 except: 10.00am *Hangin' with Mr. Cooper* (73512). 10.30 *The Mervyns* (38864). 12.00 *Australia Wild* (215627). 12.35 *Film: There's No Business Like Show Business* (4304070). 2.00 *Channel 4 Racing* (56329512). 3.00 *Springs* (191). 7.00 *Newyddion* a *Chwaraeon* (295203). 7.15 *Llywfan* (233086). 7.45 *Ondertoe* a *Oban* (232357). 8.15 *Hot Shots* (859422). 8.45 *Penelope* (8579796). 9.15 *Snapper* – *Pennsylvania* by *Byt* (594609). 10.35 *The Surgery* (648970). 11.35 *Homicide: Life on the Street* (648970). 5.25 - 5.30am *Strange Bird* (8329520).

Radio

Radio 1
6.00am Dave Pearce 9.30 Mark Goodier 12.30 Lisa Funnell 3.30 Trevor Nelson 6.30 Danny Dyer 9.00 Radio 1 Rap Show 12.00 1. Reggae Dancehall Nite 2.00 Essential Mix: Jimmy L 4.00-6.00am Annie Nightingale

Radio 2
6.00am Mo Dutta 8.05 Brian Matthew 10.00 Steve Wright's Saturday Show 1.00 Forecast 1.30 The News 2.00 Jools Holland's Special 2.00 Jools Spies 4.00 Alan Freeman 5.30 BR5-49 6.30 Mark Knopfler: Roots (R) 7.00 Nul Points 8.00 Eurovision Song Contest. See *Choice*, right. 11.00 Bob Harris 1.00 Charles Nove 4.00-7.00am Mo Dutta

Radio 3
6.55am *News*. 7.00 *Record Review*. 9.00 *Building a Library*. 10.15 *Record Release*. 11.15 *Rescue*. 12.00 *Private Passions*. Michael Berkeley's guest is the choreographer Shoshana Davies. 1.00 *News*. 1.15 *Vintage Years*. Lynne Jenkins explores British conductor Leslie Howard's wide-ranging recorded legacy. 3.00 *BBC Festival of Brass*. The third of six concerts features the BNF Band, conductor Richard Evans. John Reisman: Prelude (first UK broadcast). Balay, ar. Whig: Overture of the World. Cello: images. Fichtel: An Epic Symphony. 4.00 *London International String Quartet Competition*. Beethoven's String Quartet in F minor. Op. 95 is played by the Belcea Quartet, who won third prize, and his String Quartet in F, Op. 135 by the Castagni Quartet from France, who were the runners-up. 5.00 *Jazz Record Requests*. 5.45 *Music Matters*. Ivan Hewitt previews a television series about conductor Mark Wigglesworth and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. 6.30 *Midnight*, re. a Ponto. Mozart's first operatic success, composed when he was 14 years old, follows the traditional pattern of noble characters, harems, deceptions and long set-piece arias. This performance was recorded at the 1997 Mozart

Choice

Will the curse of the Eurovision Song Contest (8pm, R2) be visited on the Irish again? Each time they win it, they have to stage the contest the following year, at potentially ruinous expense. In the past five years, they've triumphed four times (and the year they didn't, an Irish woman won for Norway). Ken Bruce (left) comments:

Week in Salzburg in January. Sung in Italian. Bruce Ford, tenor (Mitrade), Christine Oates, soprano (Sifare), Vessella Kasarova, mezzo (Famocel), Cynthia Steele, soprano (Apsara). Head Grant Murphy, soprano (smeane), Salzburg Camerata Academica/Roger Norrington. 9.20 *String Duo*. David Juritz (violin), Lorenz Blaise (cello). 10.00 *News*. 10.05 *News Briefing*. 10.10 *News*. 10.15 *News*. 10.20 *News*. 10.25 *News*. 10.30 *News*. 10.35 *News*. 10.40 *News*. 10.45 *News*. 10.50 *News*. 10.55 *News*. 11.00 *News*. 11.05 *News*. 11.10 *News*. 11.15 *News*. 11.20 *News*. 11.25 *News*. 11.30 *News*. 11.35 *News*. 11.40 *News*. 11.45 *News*. 11.50 *News*. 11.55 *News*. 12.00 *News*. 12.05 *News*. 12.10 *News*. 12.15 *News*. 12.20 *News*. 12.25 *News*. 12.30 *News*. 12.35 *News*. 12.40 *News*. 12.45 *News*. 12.50 *News*. 12.55 *News*. 1.00 *News*. 1.05 *News*. 1.10 *News*. 1.15 *News*. 1.20 *News*. 1.25 *News*. 1.30 *News*. 1.35 *News*. 1.40 *News*. 1.45 *News*. 1.50 *News*. 1.55 *News*. 2.00 *News*. 2.05 *News*. 2.10 *News*. 2.15 *News*. 2.20 *News*. 2.25 *News*. 2.30 *News*. 2.35 *News*. 2.40 *News*. 2.45 *News*. 2.50 *News*. 2.55 *News*. 3.00 *News*. 3.05 *News*. 3.10 *News*. 3.15 *News*. 3.20 *News*. 3.25 *News*. 3.30 *News*. 3.35 *News*. 3.40 *News*. 3.45 *News*. 3.50 *News*. 3.55 *News*. 4.00 *News*. 4.05 *News*. 4.10 *News*. 4.15 *News*. 4.20 *News*. 4.25 *News*. 4.30 *News*. 4.35 *News*. 4.40 *News*. 4.45 *News*. 4.50 *News*. 4.55 *News*. 5.00 *News*. 5.05 *News*. 5.10 *News*. 5.15 *News*. 5.20 *News*. 5.25 *News*. 5.30 *News*. 5.35 *News*. 5.40 *News*. 5.45 *News*. 5.50 *News*. 5.55 *News*. 6.00 *News*. 6.05 *News*. 6.10 *News*. 6.15 *News*. 6.20 *News*. 6.25 *News*. 6.30 *News*. 6.35 *News*. 6.40 *News*. 6.45 *News*. 6.50 *News*. 6.55 *News*. 7.00 *News*. 7.05 *News*. 7.10 *News*. 7.15 *News*. 7.20 *News*. 7.25 *News*. 7.30 *News*. 7.35 *News*. 7.40 *News*. 7.45 *News*. 7.50 *News*. 7.55 *News*. 8.00 *News*. 8.05 *News*. 8.10 *News*. 8.15 *News*. 8.20 *News*. 8.25 *News*. 8.30 *News*. 8.35 *News*. 8.40 *News*. 8.45 *News*. 8.50 *News*. 8.55 *News*. 9.00 *News*. 9.05 *News*. 9.10 *News*. 9.15 *News*. 9.20 *News*. 9.25 *News*. 9.30 *News*. 9.35 *News*. 9.40 *News*. 9.45 *News*. 9.50 *News*. 9.55 *News*. 10.00 *News*. 10.05 *News*. 10.10 *News*. 10.15 *News*. 10.20 *News*. 10.25 *News*. 10.30 *News*. 10.35 *News*. 10.40 *News*. 10.45 *News*. 10.50 *News*. 10.5



Today in New York, the world chess champion faces a new challenge from the most powerful chess computer. William Hartston assesses the prospects



Baron von Kempelen's alleged chess-playing automaton The Turk had a human player concealed in its innards

In 1770, at the court of Maria Theresa of Austria, Baron Otto von Kempelen caused a sensation by demonstrating the world's chess-playing automaton. "The Turk" was a man-sized turbaned figure seated at a chess table. When a human opponent sat at the other side of the board, it would reply to his moves with a cranking of joints as its hand moved to a piece, picked it up, and deposited it on the chosen square. And it won the vast majority of its games.

Doubters, naturally enough, suspected that a strong human player was hiding in its innards, but von Kempelen delighted in opening a variety of doors to the cabinets beneath the board to reveal a fine collection of cogs and levers, but no sign of any person operating them.

It was, of course, all an illusion. There was a man inside, but his location changed as doors opened and closed, thanks to an ingenious system of sliding platforms and pulleys. Whichever door you opened, he was never there.

After a successful tour of the courts of Europe - there is even one tale of its sweeping the pieces from the board in disgust when the Emperor Napoleon tried to test it by making a series of illegal moves - The Turk lost its novelty value and went into retirement. However, when von Kempelen died, the machine was sold to Johann Maelzel, inventor of the metronome, who added music to its charms and launched it on a highly acclaimed tour of America.

The Turk epitomised our fasci-

nation with the idea of an intellectual struggle between men and machines. However, for a machine to play respectable chess without having a man hidden inside it we had to wait for the development of electronic computers.

Since the earliest days of the computer, the game of chess, with its high premium on accurate calculation, has played an important part. The early development of artificial intelligence was haunted by this thought: if computers can't even beat humans at chess, what hope do they have for making really complex decisions? Chess was the touchstone by which machine intelligence would be measured.

In 1843, Charles Babbage had speculated about the possibilities of his "analytical engine" playing chess; in 1948, Norbert Wiener, pioneer of cybernetics, discussed the idea of a chess-playing computer; in 1950, Claude Shannon proposed a theoretical strategy for such a machine; in 1951, Alan Turing wrote out a chess algorithm that could be calculated by hand. Finally, around 1960, a machine first defeated its programmer.

All the same, the top human players could afford to be scornful of computer chess for another 30 years. While the artificial intelligence repeatedly predicted that



Garry Kasparov hoping to hold back the tides of silicon

a machine would be world champion "within 10 years", the decades rolled past without computers attaining professional standards. They became very good at avoiding tactical errors (which decide the vast majority of amateur games), but concepts of deep strategy continued to elude them. With increased processing speed, however, that began to change.

Chess is a game at which humans ought, by most rational criteria, to be rather bad. With up to 32 pieces scattered over 64 squares, a typical position con-

tains too much information for us to take in. Experiments have repeatedly shown that our brains can only juggle about seven pieces of information at any one time. Yet we cope very well at chess by using our highest skills of pattern recognition and concept formation to turn chess into a game of high-level judgement rather than pure calculation. The question for computers is how much calculation is necessary to render such judgement and strategy redundant.

Last year, we came close to an

answer. Computers will never be able to analyse all the possibilities in a chess game - there are more possibilities for the first 25 moves than there are atoms in the universe - but when Deep Blue, the IBM supercomputer, started thinking at the rate of two million chess positions every second, it proved it could give humanity a fair run for its money. Indeed, in the first game of its challenge match in 1996 against Garry Kasparov, the strongest human player, Deep Blue registered an astonishing victory. In later games, however, Kasparov treated the beast with more respect and won the match by three wins to one with two draws.

Today, the return match starts. Deeper Blue thinks twice as fast as last year's model and, we are told, has considerably more chess knowledge incorporated into its program. Kasparov is still a clear favourite, but he is almost alone among top players in believing that the tide of silicon can be checked for much longer. The playing strength of computers has increased with their processing speed at a constant rate. And processing speed doubles every 18 months. At that rate, Kasparov has no more than a couple of years left before ceding his crown to a heap of metal.

Games people play

Pandora Melly tries to create a good impression

Harold Brooks-Baker, 63, Publishing director, 'Burke's Peerage'

My favourite pastime is people-watching. What I try to do is figure out what different bloods people have, and what social background they come from. You used to be able to tell immediately a German from a Frenchman, or a Hungarian from a Finn, but it's much more difficult now because of the way the world is shrinking socially. Also because people wear the same boring clothes. There's very little originality in trainers and blue-jeans, whatever label you put on them.

What I like to do, after making various assumptions, is to try to find out who people actually are. I get only one chance in a thousand to do this, and it is much more difficult with women than men, because women are more chameleon-like. They imitate others, and have more things done to themselves, which is rather confusing. Also, if a woman marries above the social and economic position she was born into, you don't often spot it.

whereas if a man marries up, it is immediately obvious in the whole manner, the entire presentation.

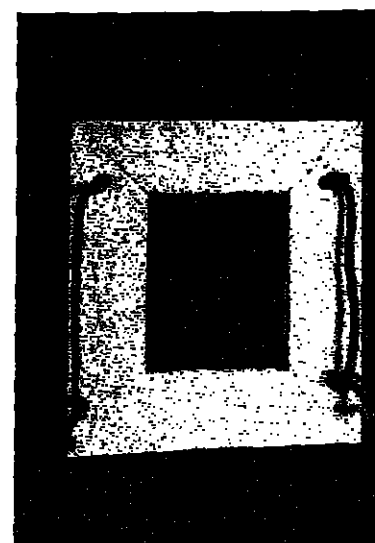
I can usually guess what type of jobs people have. Some professions are very easy. For instance, barristers wear sombre clothes and a faraway expression; their hair is clipped shorter than is the trend today, and ball-point pens and things stick out of their pockets. Solicitors are the same, but a bit tatter.

When I was young and worked in the White House, I used this knowledge to determine whether the person coming unto my humble entrance should be let into the offices of the important and famous politicians I was working for. I like to know who I'm dealing with, and nothing upsets me more than reading an obituary and not knowing who the grandparents were. To understand people, you need the proper frame.

"Manwatching" by Desmond Morris is available at many good second-hand bookshops. Or you may look them up in "Who's Who 1997" (A&C Black, £98)

Don't junk it... use it

From orange crate to bathroom mirror



This elegantly framed bathroom mirror was made out of an inelegantly unframed mirror (you can even use a broken one) and an orange crate. Here's how to do it.

Ingredients: one simple, unadorned mirror, one discarded wooden crate, a pair of pliers, a saw (or even a Stanley knife), an electric drill and a tube of glue. String is optional.

Stage One: Destruction. This is the most enjoyable part of the operation. Taking the pliers, you proceed to dismember the crate into its constituent parts. You will be left with a couple of squarish pieces of wood (which formed the ends of the crate), a pile of slats (which went along the sides), several pieces of firewood and assorted mangled bits of metal and clips which held everything together.

Stage Two: Assembly. Take one of the end-pieces of wood to form the back of the mirror. Lay the mirror on it and frame with a square formed by the slats to measure off the size of the finished object. Mark the edges of the frame and cut the backing square down to the right size. Glue the mirror centrally on to the backing wood. Cut and glue pieces of wood to fill in the gaps around the edges of the mirror. (This last stage is particularly useful if the whole operation is designed to make a small mirror out of a broken piece from a larger one.) To complete the basic mirror, cut the four sides of the frame (with neatly dove-tailed corners) from more slats of wood. These will cover any broken edges on the mirror to leave only a neat square visible underneath. Glue in place and clamp together or leave under a heavy book.

Stage Three: Decoration. By drilling holes through the wood (taking care to avoid any mirror lurking underneath), you may thread the object either with string or with the bits of metal salvaged from the original crate. Using the latter creates the impression of an object sewn together with wire by true artisans rather than glued by an amateur.

Bawn O'Beirne-Ranelagh

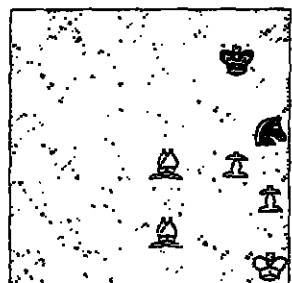
The games page is edited by William Hartston

Chess William Hartston

concise crossword

Bridge Alan Hiron

Backgammon Chris Bray



Here is a position that illustrates the real problem facing Deep Blue, or any other computer hoping to beat the world champion. It's White to play. A good human player will think like this:

"Is there any reason I shouldn't take his knight? I know that a rook's pawn and wrong-coloured bishop can't win against a lone king, but what about two wrong bishops and two rook's pawns? (Pause for brief consideration to realise that the black king can never be dislodged from h8 by any number of white-squared bishops and h-pawns.) Well, I'd better avoid that one then."

Human therefore plays 1.Kh2 (or almost anything other than gxf5) and cautiously grinds out a victory. A computer, on the other hand, thinks like this: 1.gxh5 comes top of my

list of attractive moves, since it leaves me with an advantage close to +8, which improves on the present figure of +5. So unless my endgame database includes the resulting position as something to avoid, that'll be the move I play.

The trouble is, as will be found by testing any chess computer, that even if the case of two white-squared bishops and two h-pawns is in its database, then you need only add another pawn on h2, or another bishop on a8, for the witless machine to blunder into the trap.

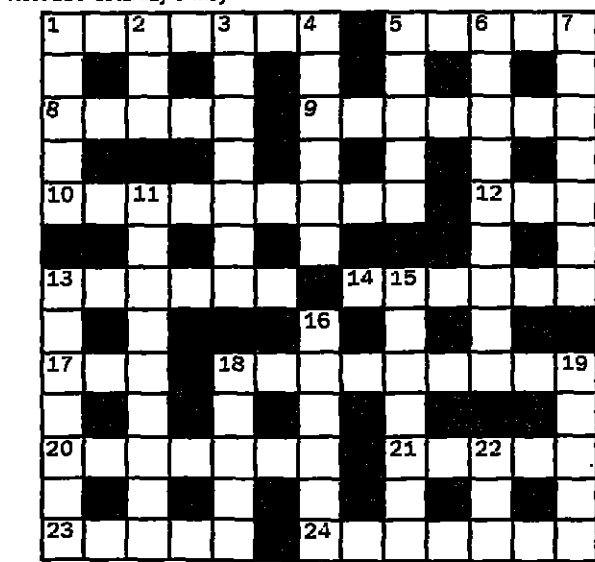
This position, of course, is a pathological freak, but the underlying problem is real: chess computers cannot generalise on the basis of past experience or existing knowledge. How do you program a machine to realise on its own a thought like "any number of white-squared bishops makes no difference"?

With their "I-go-here, he-goes-there" analysis, computers cannot move above it all to reach a level of higher understanding. And that is why Garry Kasparov will probably defeat Deeper Blue in New York over the next week.

Sunspots revisited

Following last week's report on the correlation between sunspots and Tory election performance, we should like to mention that there was no sunspot activity whatsoever on 1 May. Solar activity thus predicted a Labour landslide.

No.3269 Saturday 3 May



- ACROSS**
- More substantial (7)
 - Correct (5)
 - Go over main points again (5)
 - Synthetic fibre (7)
 - Type of fungus (9)
 - Greek letter (3)
 - Metallic element (6)
 - City state, rival to Athens (6)
 - Sailor (3)
 - Treat roughly (9)
 - Feeler (7)
 - Up above (5)
 - Endures (5)
 - Person of learning (7)

- DOWN**
- Deserve (5)
 - Part of circle (3)
 - Deadlock (7)
 - Cause (6)
 - Country (5)
 - Plant with yellow flowers (9)
 - Keyboard composition (7)
 - Equipment (9)
 - Shrill whistle (7)
 - Egyptian ruler (7)
 - Historic records (6)
 - Sign of subtraction (5)
 - Go in (5)
 - Fuel (3)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Maine, 4 Tenants (Maintenance), 8 Clearer, 9 Visor, 10 Basic, 11 Earnest, 13 Hang, 15 Easter, 17 Earthy, 20 Ends, 22 Tibbets, 24 Sine, 26 Wring, 27 Nabobs, 28 Layette, 29 Sling, DOWN: 1 Macabre, 2 Julius, 3 Earache, 4 Turcon, 5 Never, 6 Nascent, 7 Strut, 12 Aged, 14 Area, 16 Subsidy, 18 Assault, 19 Yawning, 21 Nuzzle, 22 Towel, 23 Eight, 25 Naomi.

Game all; dealer South

North		South	
♠ Q 8 3		♠ A 9 7 6 5	
♥ J 5		♥ A K Q 2	
♦ A K J 7		♦ Q 3	
♣ 8 7 6 4		♣ Q 5	
West		East	
♠ K 10		♠ J 4 2	
♥ 10 8 4 3		♥ 9 7 6	
♦ 10 8 4		♦ 9 6 5 2	
♣ A K J 9		♣ 10 3 2	

"A good game is one that makes a bad game is one that fails." slightly misquoting Bob Hamman (he was originally talking about slams). On those grounds, I suppose that you would judge 4♠ to be a bad contract. But would you have made it a good one?

South opened 1♠, North bid 2♦, and followed with jump preference in spades when South bid hearts. South went on to game and West led ♠A against 4♠. A look at dummy suggested nothing more attractive and he

plodded on with clubs, declarer ruffing the third round.

There was an abundance of spare tricks. Surely the only conceivable danger (assuming that trumps behaved well) was that there might be an adverse ruff. So without much thought, South cashed ♠A and led a second trump. You can see the outcome: West won with ♠K and led a fourth round of clubs. Now East scored the setting trick with his jack of trumps.

It was suspicious when East followed with ♠2 at trick one. Surely he held three cards in the suit. Instead of releasing the ♠A immediately, declarer does better to lead low towards the queen (after all, he needs to find West with ♠K). West duly takes his king but now when a fourth round of clubs comes, South still has ♠A and can over-ruff a possible ♠J or ♠10 from East.

And, if after doing so, West plays low on the next trump lead, South can consider finessing dummy's eight. No need, for the ten pops up, so it must have been a good game after all.

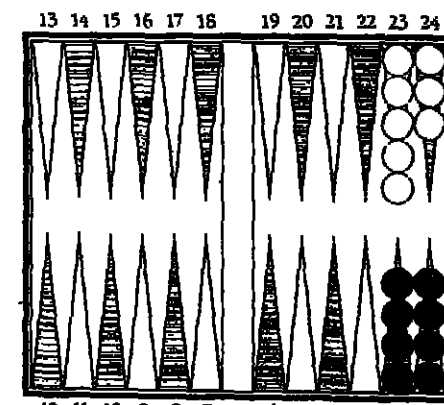
Perplexity

Mixed doubles:
Interim tongs simmer wintered
internee collage.

The above sentence conceals three connected answers each of two words. To find them, all you have to do is to group the six given words into three pairs, then rearrange the letters within each pair. A prize of the new Chambers 21st Dictionary will be

awarded to the sender of the first set of correct answers, when we open entries on 14 May. Answers to: Perplexity, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

19 April answers:
Spice Girls (prig slices)
Rolling Stones (loon ringlets),
Beach boys (baby chise).
Winner: Ann Higginbottom
(High Wycombe).



Back to basics this week with a look at simple bear-off problems. Assume for a moment that all the remaining men are on the respective one-points. Four men against four is always a double (or redouble) and a drop. Six against six is also a double and a drop - the doubled side wins 21.2 per cent of the time, not quite enough for a take.

It becomes more interesting with eight men against eight. This position is a double (or redouble) and a take. (Not a wonderful take as the taking side will lose 0.92 points per game, but that's better than losing a full point by dropping the double. With ten v ten it depends where the cube is. If it's in the centre you should double and your opponent should take. If you own the cube you should wait a roll until it is eight v eight which will happen most of the time. If your opponent throws a double you will still be in the game and get a chance to throw a double of your own as your opponent cannot double you out.)

So the diagram position is eight v eight and must be a take, right? Wrong! It is not a pure eight v eight. If White rolls 1-1 he will only be able to take off three men and therefore not save himself a roll. This tiny difference makes the position a double and a drop.

What if you have six men on your one-point and your opponent has two on each of his one, two and three-points? He doubles and you drop because its six v six. Wrong again! The chances that he will roll three successive ones and the fact that 1-1 and 2-2 do not save him a roll means that you have the thinnest of takes. In such borderline cases, attention to detail can win, or save, you a lot of money.



John Walsh
meets...
Chris
Rea



Chris Rea: a barrel-chested truckdriver of a musician who squeezes out guitar solos of piercing sweetness.

PHOTO: ANDREW BURTMAN

The reluctant rocker

For a period, at the start of his career, Chris Rea was known as "Elton Joel". This humorous construction was invented by Rea's friends to reflect the fact that his record company, Magnet, couldn't decide, in 1979, whether to launch him upon the waiting world as "the British Billy Joel" or "the Northern Elton John". In fact, neither description fitted him - few people could have confused him with either the "Uptown Girl" keyboard-drubber or the effete podge from Pinner, and his instrument was the slide guitar rather than the piano. But that's record companies for you. They listened to his gruff North Yorkshire blues growl and decided, absurdly, to market him as a crooner. And they told him they didn't like his name much. "Chris Rea" just didn't sound... croony enough for the easy listening audience. Rea sarcastically suggested they call him something which would appeal to Jewish and Italian audiences, thus nailing the American market. "How about Benjamin Santini?" he asked. One of the executives walked to the window and mused, "Benjamin Santini - I like that".

The problem with nomenclature, with image and identity, has dogged Rea all through his eventful, prolific, 18-year career in the rock mainstream. He has made 15 albums, had a handful of hit singles, sold millions of CDs across Europe, and is widely accepted in the world's premier league of guitar virtuosi. But it's all been at the cost of constant struggles with record companies, over-produced arrangements, wildly fluctuating sales and bad health: two years ago he got peritonitis and nearly died. Facing the prospect of never singing, touring or performing in public again, he characteristically embarked on a radical career shift and went into movies. Through all this, an image constantly recurs - of Rea having to cling on to his sense of himself, his music, his visions, while surrounded by people desperate to change his mind. Names occupy a significant place in his life. In conversation, he refers to himself as "Chris Rea" in the third person, as image-conscious boxers and footballers sometimes do, as though insisting on his objective reality. Should you walk the streets humming the chorus of his hit songs "Josephine" and "Julia", you'll be singing the names of his beloved daughters. When he talks about his home town of Middlesbrough, its main shortcoming was its lack of nicknames: "It was never lucky enough to have a city identity. You know - Newcastle has Geordies, Manchester has Mancunians, Liverpool has Scousers. But Middlesbrough? A lot of people in those days would just look at you and say 'Where's Middlesbrough?'".

Rea left his embarrassingly anonymous northern home in 1968, and headed for London. He had no career, few prospects and an aborted career in his father's ice-cream manufactory behind him. But he had spent his twenties listening to the delta blues of Sonny Boy Williamson and Muddy Waters, and the more contemporary guitar heroics of Joe Walsh. He bought a guitar at £2, tuned it to E major, learned to play bottleneck and slide, and began to write songs. "Rock 'n' roll was my art school," he says. "For many people from working-class backgrounds, rock wasn't a chosen thing, it was the only thing, the only avenue of creativity available for them. When I was young I wanted most of all to be a writer of films and film music. But Middles-

brough in 1968 wasn't the place to be if you wanted to do movie scores... But it wasn't hard to leave in the Seventies depression. Lots of my friends left to be offshore welders..."

There's a fair amount of the welder about Mr Rea. I met him at a gorgeous recording studio in Cookham, Berkshire, once owned by Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin. We sat on a plush kelin-upholstered sofa overlooking a tranquil stream. Swallows flitted pointlessly about in the warm sunshine. Rea was in the middle of

Only the English would call it slush. The Italians wouldn't call it slush. What you call slush I call emotive melody!

re-recording his storming hit "Let's Dance" for Bob Mortimer, of Reeves and Mortimer fame, who is releasing it as the official Middlesbrough Cup Final tie-in record. Rea shambles in from his labours, short but beaklike, lumberjack shirt, black tracksuit pants, huge trainers. He has a spectacularly simian nose, and a big broad face with a mane of chestnut curls. Someone described him well as "conquistadorial", spotting the romantic adventurer that co-exists with the workmanlike grafter. Rea's appeal has always combined the two. His gravelly singing shares the battered integrity of Tom Waits and Leonard Cohen but without their lyrical gift; in its place Rea injects a fair amount of schmaltz. It's quite something, at a Chris Rea concert, to watch

this barrel-chested truckdriver of a musician squeezing out guitar solos of piercing sweetness and, on a Chris Rea CD, listen to him singing, in a voice Rasso Rizzo would have envied, lines like "A kiss for every star in the sky way above! You'll always be my one and only! Summer love". You would, however, be well advised not to refer to this tendency (as I did) as "slush". Rea tends to bridle at such words, as if you were scolding his whole Italian background and the musical tradition he grew up in. "Only the English would call it slush. The Italians wouldn't call it slush. Nor would the Irish. It's a racist thing, like saying African music's all bongos." But surely he liked a bit of moon-over-Capri lushness? "What you call slush," he said crossly, "I call emotive melody."

Sitting in a studio wallpapered with gold and platinum discs, Rea discusses without undue modesty the place he holds in the rock pantheon. "I am in that unique little club," he told me, "where I went into music because I love music, not because I wanted to be rich and famous. I've always knocked on the door of the musicians' room, not the rock stars' room. The British press refuses to see the difference between them, mainly because of the capers of people like Phil Collins, a musician who behaves like a rock star. But there are people who love music and have no interest in being a rock star at all."

It's all very well, I said, playing this Reluctant Debutant when you're successful and rich... "But I'm not a reluctant rock star," he said emphatically. "I am not one at all. I haven't an ounce of rock star in me." But you've got 15 albums with your name on them, I pointed out. If you disliked stardom, why didn't you settle for being an anonymous musician in a band? "Because of the Voice, I'm afraid," said Rea sadly. "The voice has been my joker card that sometimes has played like an ace and some-

times a joker. When you sing the way I sing, it's impossible to get people to talk about anything else". Poor chap. So who else would be put in this band of un-starry music lovers like himself? "I reckon there's Clapton, Mark Knopfler, Van Morrison, myself, David Gilmour, the most underrated blues guitarist in the country, Ry Cooder, I adore him, and I suspect the chap out of Oasis might be pretty good." He narrowed his eyes. "What I despise about the rock star lifestyle is the lack of music in it. The average day is spent travelling to hotels, giving interviews, being nice to people you're told to be nice to, and maybe if you're lucky you might squeeze a bit of music in. The musician's day is music."

Or, more recently anyway, movie-making. Rea's film, *La Passione*, written, produced and soundtracked by himself, will be released in five UK cities from 16 May. It's a slowly unfolded, operatically sentimental tale of a 10-year-old northern boy, the son of a noisy Italian immigrant ice-cream-making family, who develops a lifelong obsession with motor racing - and especially with the real-life über-racer Wolfgang Von Trips, who was killed in his Sharknose Ferrari at the Monza Grand Prix in 1961. It's a densely textured film: at one point the Catholic boy sits in a church, and watches while Enzo Ferrari appears, God-like, from behind the altar beckoning him to heaven, and the helmeted Von Trips is equally blasphemously cast as Jesus Christ. The prancing horse of the Ferrari logo crosses the screen and blends with boy, God, car and Christ in an eerie Peter-Greenaway-ish conflation of images. There's a touch of Derek Jarman too, in the intrusions of kitsch, as when the boy invokes the figure of Shirley Bassey with the words "Shirley, Do You Own a Ferrari?" and the Tiger Bay chanteuse actually appears, to answer in song, "Yes I Own a Ferrari", to

the tune of "Yes, We Have No Bananas". Given that the details of family background and personal obsession blend seamlessly with Rea's own childhood, you might be forgiven for thinking the whole thing is yelpingly autobiographical. "People keep asking me that," Rea guardedly concedes, "and I say, well, it's autobiographical inasmuch as it happened to me and everybody else. Everyone's got a Von Trips in their life, I think. And people who've seen the film all say, 'I remember a day like that'. For some people it happened through football

I am in that unique club where I went into music because I love music, not because I wanted to be rich and famous!

or movies - a day when a boy's empty, innocent mind suddenly has all kinds of new stuff blown into it."

He talks about Von Trips with positively boyish enthusiasm. "He was one of the first racing drivers to wear the space helmet rather than the peaked one. He was into all the new fads, the first to wear the proper overalls. And just saying his name - Graffenburger Count Alexander Wolfgang Von Trips. I mean..." He smiles broadly and extends his hands. There's that fetish about names again...

The filming of *La Passione* was not an unrelieved joy. Rea had initially wanted to direct his own screenplay but Warner Vision, the film's distributors, wouldn't let him. Instead they came up with John B

Hobbs, a retired television director. Had their collaboration not worked? "Put it this way, I had a whole portfolio of Fellini movies in my head: Fellini, Sergio Leone. *Once Upon a Time in America* is my Bible. Whereas John Hobbs's last project had been 'Allo 'Allo...'. More frustratingly, the studio executives kept trying to turn his simple tale of childhood fantasy into something else. "There was a lot of hard work in making *La Passione*, and a lot of grief, because I had very set ideas about how I wanted it to be, and everyone else had a different idea. Some executives wanted it to be like *Local Hero*, another lot wanted it to be the story of a boy and his father, another lot wanted a zappy story about becoming rich and buying a Ferrari. People were saying, 'Can't we make this driver Nigel Mansell? Or James Hunt?' and talkin' about 'cross-pollinating the market'. I wanted none of it. My thing was about how fantasies occur, about passions, enjoying them..."

His passion for cars has reached positively manic proportions. Most of his song-titles have something to do with four wheels and asphalt: "The Road to Hell", "Two Roads", "Freeway", "Johnny Needs a Fast Car", "Soft Top Hard Shoulder". The new single, inevitably, is called "Girl in a Sports Car", from the *La Passione* soundtrack CD. With characteristic Stakhanovite energy, Rea has a whole new album of jazz-blues tracks, entitled *The Blue Cafe*, out in October. And on Cup Final day, as the Middlesbrough crowd sing along to "Let's Dance", he is flying to Dresden, to give his first concert in five years. Hadn't he vowed to give up touring, what with the crippling abdominal pains, the stitches, the fear it might return?

"Yeah I did," growled Rea. "But I missed bein' in a band." And he stamped off into the recording studio to get his bashed-up pink Fender Stratocaster, to show me the chords of "Julia".

PAVAROTTI is coming to town next week for a recital at Covent Garden. And I understand he has specifically requested the attendance of Desmond Lynam, BBC's *Match of the Day* presenter and apparently the thinking middle-aged woman's crumpet. This demanded further investigation, the Pavarotti summons that is, not matronly taste in sports presenters.

I met Des before the England vs Georgia World Cup qualifying game, and now understand why Pavarotti owes him a lot - a small fortune arguably. Des, who has more than a passing interest in classical music, revealed that it was he who suggested to the BBC in 1990 that for their World Cup theme they use an aria he rather liked, "Nessun Dorma", by a tenor he rather liked, Pavarotti. "But we've never had a vocal as a World Cup theme before," the corporation retorted. "Then it's about time we

did," huffed Des. He prevailed. Pavarotti won an infinitely wider fan base: "Nessun Dorma" became the climax of *The Three Tenors* concert; Decca sold an awful lot of records.

I asked Des if he negotiated a commission. He stroked his moustache wanly and sighed: "No. I got nothing at all. Actually, that's not quite true. Decca sent me a tape. I put it in my machine in the car. And it broke."

PANTOMIME teaches children and often their parents to love theatre. Oh yes it does. Oh no it doesn't. The Theatre Royal, Norwich, instead of relying on anecdote, has actually analysed its audience crossover for the past five years. The results reported in the latest issue of Theatre Management Association's own journal, *Prompt*, show that the panto audience is actually quite fickle. Of last year's

audience for *Jack and the Beanstalk* 71 per cent had indeed been to the theatre on another occasion - to see *Peter Pan*, the previous year's panto. But no non-pantomime show at the Theatre Royal attracted even a third of the pantomime audience.

LAST Monday's over-long Bafta Awards should be shorter next year, when the film and television

The cup result that made Des sick as a Pavarotti



awards are given on different evenings. The separation is not before time. *The English Patient* really has very little in common with *Men Behaving Badly*. Meanwhile, Mike Leigh's disillusionment with the Academy, recounted in this paper this week, has caused a few murmurings, I hear. Leigh was quite right when he noted that the Bafta membership had never until this year nominated any of his full-

length films or TV pieces. It is a strange omission, which has led to the director of *Secrets and Lies* leaving Bafta. But he should not allow himself to forget that the Bafta hierarchy did in 1995 give him the much prized Michael Balcon special award. They at least acted with logic even if the membership at large acted in rather more mysterious ways.

SIR Cameron Mackintosh is a great believer that musicals evolve in their early stages. Generally, though, the evolution is complete within the first decade. Except for *Les Misérables*, which after 12 years will close for 10 days in September to incorporate changes to the staging, lyrics and music, Sir Cameron has decided. Seen by 40 million people worldwide and with 29 cast

recordings out there, it seems a little late in the day to go tampering with the show's appearance, let alone its words and music.

Not so, says Nick Allott, executive producer for the show. In fact, the creatives will be moving in not just to bolster the words and music but to bolster the stage, which takes a battering every night when the barricades are stormed. In addition, the whole creative team has got together to review the "lighting, colour and texture" of the production.

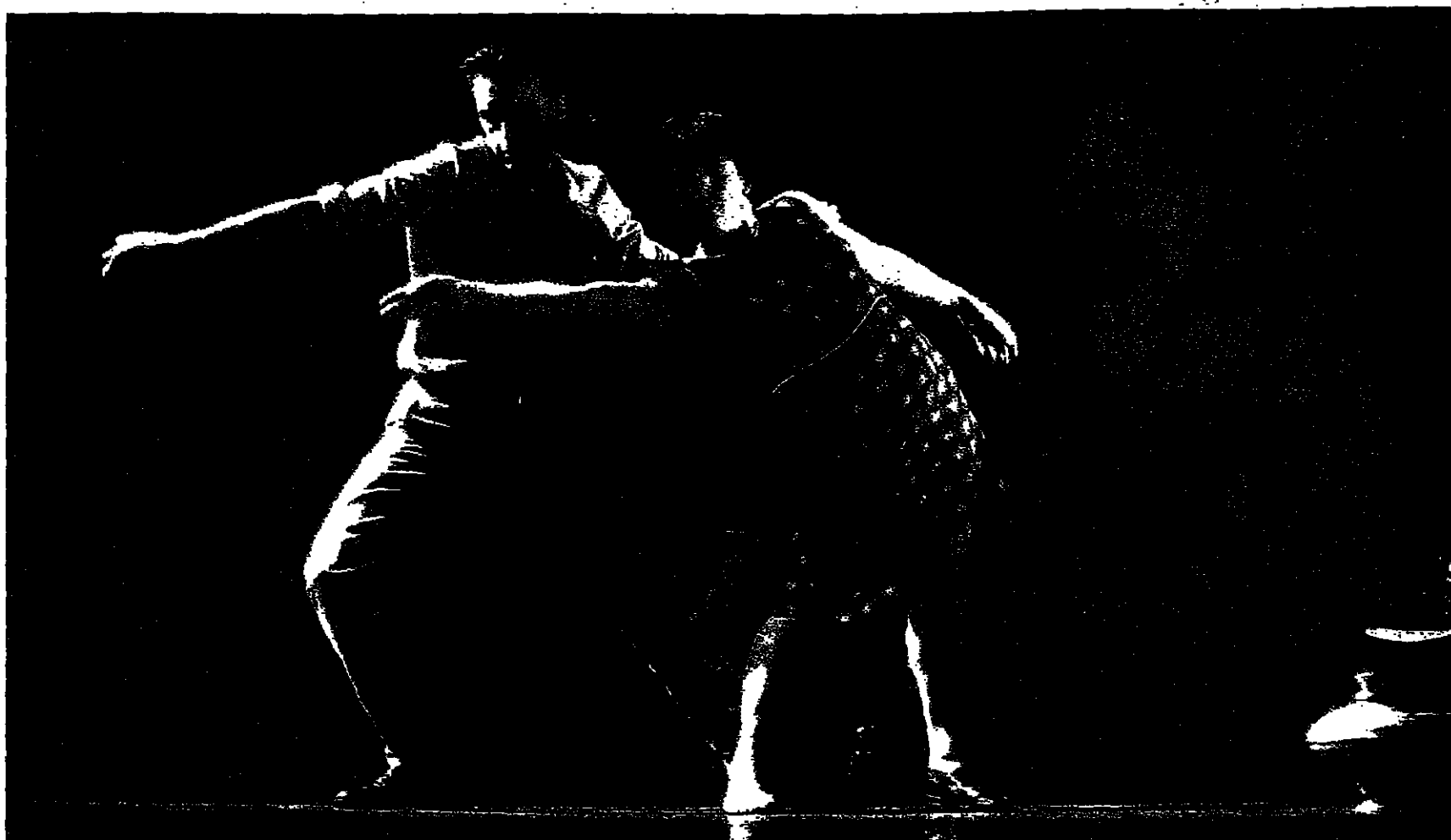
And the new lyrics? Actually, they're old lyrics. Material excised from the original Barbican production because the show was too long, but suddenly after 12 years the show's running shorter and the material can be restored. Clearly, casts these days sing faster, a form of musical evolution even Sir Cameron cannot have anticipated.

arts & books

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Pocket dynamo

Short on stature, high on energy, Aletta Collins has danced her way through opera, musicals and the movies. Now she's taking on Chekhov. By Nadine Meisner



'Why do we constantly have to look beyond where we are to find happiness?' Aletta Collins (right) in her version of Chekhov's '3 Sisters' Chris Nash

She looks so girly – just turned 30, measuring “five foot, no, nearly five foot one” – you wonder how in the past decade she has held her own among the heavyweight elite of Europe's opera houses, the big-shot administrators, the cosmopolitan conductors, the unfragile divas. She is such a delicious collection of curves, you applaud in this anorexic age her success as a dancer gifted enough to be accepted into the exclusive club that was London Contemporary Dance Theatre. She sounds so chirpy after the premiere of her most recent dance piece, *3 Sisters*, you marvel at how many different assignments she can take on without tripping herself up.

Aletta Collins, whizz performer, choreographer and director, works in dance, opera, film and musicals. She was born in ordinary Bromley and brought up near small-time Watford in a non-theatrical family, although her great-grandmother did belong to “the first flying ballet” in Paris. (She doesn't know if this was a trapeze act.) As a student she choreographed a piece, *Stand By Your Man*, which was taken into LCDT's repertoire, but her first professional job was in opera.

She was in the fourth year at London Contemporary Dance School when the opera director Steven Pimlott and the designer Tom Cairns arrived in search of a choreographer for their production of Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila* in Bregenz. They watched a student performance which included her work and she went to see them the next day. “I didn't know anything about opera,” she remem-

bers. “I'd never seen an opera in my life. So Steven said, ‘Come to ENO's *Billy Budd* tonight’. And I sat there thinking, ‘Oh, my God, what is this?’ But because I liked Steven and Tom and the project seemed so exciting, I decided, OK, I'm off. I was just 21 and I had to choreograph this substantial 10-minute bacchanal ballet for the opera's last act, and I didn't know how. I read the CD booklet and found myself with 20 Bulgarian ballet dancers who didn't speak a word of English.”

Yet it went well. So well that Pimlott invited her to choreograph his mega arena-style *Carmen* at Earl's Court, while Cairns asked her to collaborate with him on stagings of Tippet's *King Priam* (for Opera North) and Puccini's *La Bohème* (in Stuttgart) – whereupon she left LCDT. This was the start of an enduring professional partnership with Cairns, a symbiosis which dissolves boundaries so that “the working process becomes an organic giving and taking and it becomes hard to decide who did what”. Collins has co-directed operas with Cairns (the last being Birtwistle's *The Second Mrs Kong* at Glyndebourne); Cairns designs Collins's dance pieces; and, together, they have made three dance films for BBC2.

So now Collins has a respectable collection of opera CDs and posters of her productions, but also a shortage of chairs. She sits on the floor and shuffles about. Is she all right down there? “Yes, yes, I'm fine. I'm only skidding about because I'm a bit sore.” If her body is aching, it is because she loves dancing and has choreographed herself into *3 Sisters*.

She has to thank her mother's thrift for making her a dancer. “When I was eight, I wanted to ditch ballet to join the Brownies like all my friends. But my mother said no, because she had just bought me these new ballet shoes.” Aged 16, she finished her first bash at choreography while attending the children's class at The Place – a 30-minute piece for nine dancers, created over two years in little bits every Saturday. She went through the London Contemporary Dance School system, but not immediately into the (now-defunct) company. Her shape and style didn't fit the streamlined LCDT aesthetic, where absolute perfection in Graham technique was the foundation. But she did appear as a guest, and my memory winds back to the unforgettable duet Jonathan Lunn created for her called *Doppelgänger* – her compact silhouette darting round his rangier one with dappled hyperactive steps. She joined LCDT later for 18 months, when the choreographer Dan Wagoner became director, and introduced a more congruous ethos “with more speed and attack”.

Her candid patter echoes the way she dances. “I preferred to work as a freelance, choreographing for LCDT and Phoenix

Dance Company,” she is saying. “And I didn't want the responsibility of having my own group.” What changed her mind? “I made a piece for some dance students and, because I liked the result, I wanted to give it more than just two performances.” That piece was *Che Gelida Marina*, a piquant take on *La Bohème*, which became the Aletta Collins Dance Company's first piece and which will tour again this autumn, along with *3 Sisters*. Her desire to launch a company showed perfect timing, since it coincided with the decision of Southern Arts to help fund an associate dance company for three years. But this is the third and final year, and a question mark hangs over the future.

The group is also Collins's gift to her dancing self. “I wouldn't,” she supposes, “have much opportunity for dancing if it wasn't for my own work.” In fact, many choreographers prefer not to live the schizophrenia of simultaneously creating and performing. It is difficult to create when you are right inside your creation; so Collins relies on the dispassionate eye of forthright friends like Tom Cairns.

3 Sisters is the company's third piece. Although Collins is a narrative choreog-

rapher, she doesn't exactly go in for conventional storytelling – “I didn't want to do the dance of the Chekhov play.” Rather, Chekhov is a springboard: the themes are drawn from the play, the characters are concentrated down to three women and one man. Collins hasn't seen Kenneth MacMillan's ballet version, *Winter Dreams*, and when I remark that it helps to know the play before seeing *Winter Dreams*, she says she hopes her piece isn't the same. “I think it has its own internal logic and narrative.” The Collins *3 Sisters* is part road movie with hitchhiker interludes, part discourse on the human tendency to look beyond what we already have. “Chekhov urges us to reassess the feeling that life will only start when we get to Moscow or get a husband or get whatever. Why do we constantly have to look beyond where we are to find happiness?”

The way the characters disregard their present condition links in with the *fin de siècle* aura of the play, that anxiety about the future – “which of course makes complete sense now”. The parallels between Chekhov's *fin de siècle* and our own are mirrored in Collins's musical choices: turn-of-the-century Russian music, alternating with the disco sound of Sister Sledge and extracts from a Russian language tape (which is, by the way, the Collins *Teach Yourself Russian*).

Collins's own present is too full for her to fix her gaze on some utopian horizon. After choreographing the revival of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, then devising a cossack dance for *Watch That Man*, a film starring Bill Murray, then moving into her new WC1 flat in January, she admits she felt the need “to hole up for a few weeks” before starting *3 Sisters* and thinking about a solo for herself this summer. Even so, she clearly enjoys juggling the varied components of her career. “I think I'm very lucky to be exposed to so many different art-forms and to people who are brilliant in them – singers, conductors, directors, film-makers. I get to see first hand these people working. And that has been the biggest influence on me, watching how people achieve what they do.”

Aletta Collins's '3 Sisters' is performed at The Place Theatre, Duke's Road, London WC1 (0171-387 0031) on 6 and 7 May; then tours to 25 May.

Raymond Monelle on Saint-Saëns's 'Samson et Dalila'
Glyn Brown on Steve Winwood

HOIST THE MAIN SAIL
SWAB THE DECK...
(Or just sit back
and watch others do it.)



A RIDLEY SCOTT FILM
WHITE SQUALL
Based on A True Story
NOW AVAILABLE TO BUY ON VIDEO

David
Benedict
WEEK IN
REVIEW

overview

critical view

on view

our view



THE FILM
Donnie Brasco

Mike “Four Weddings and a Funeral” Newell's latest film is scriptwriter Paul Attanasio's story of the late 1970s Mafia apprenticeship of Johnny Depp as an undercover FBI agent under the wing of wiseguy and small-time hood Al Pacino.

Adam Mars-Jones admired Pacino's haunted performance but decided “the film delivers something closer to sombre tension than big thrills”. “Pacino's Lefty is one of the subtlest performances of his career... a Mob movie even for those who dislike the genre,” praised the *Telegraph*. “If this is a movie that requires some patience, the dividends it yields are considerable,” pronounced *The Guardian*. “A reflective movie more concerned with trust and friendship than piling up corpses... distinctive and memorable,” approved *The Times*. “A complex, rewarding film that stays in the mind,” applauded *Time Out*. “The best Mafia movie in years... talk about the banality of evil. Except that *Donnie Brasco* doesn't talk about it, it shows it,” marvelled the *FT*.

Cert 18, 126 minutes, on general release.

Pacino excels in a role tailor-made for him in the first gangster movie to show us a powerful *Mezzos* who is short of a few bob.



THE PLAY
Doña Rosita - the Spinster

Phyllida Lloyd directs Peter Oswald's translation of Lorca's rarely staged tragicomic portrait of women in love and friendship. Anthony Ward designs and Phoebe Nichols plays the lead with a cast including Eleanor Bron, Celia Imrie and Kathryn Hunter.

Paul Taylor was unsettled by the cast's Englishness but succumbed to “a performance of great dignity... the final scene fully lives up to those comparisons with the last act of *The Cherry Orchard*.” “Delicately moving... a subtly intelligent and very well acted production,” lauded *The Guardian*. “A formidable cast combines like one of the better orchestras, unselfishly supportive between solos,” sang the *Mail*. “Miss Lloyd's powerful but sometimes over-ornamented production... Anthony Ward's beautifully conceived garden conservatory,” approved the *Standard*. “An honourable stab at a tricky play; but maybe too honourable,” sighed *The Times*. “Phoebe Nichols does her line in congealed home counties girliness... It is all unaffection,” winced the *FT*.

At the Almeida, London N1 (0171-359 4404) to 7 June.

The difficult shifts from comedy to tragedy don't always come off but Anthony Ward's set, Lucy Roberts's costumes and Paul Pyant's lighting, plus tremendous performances from Celia Imrie and Kathryn Hunter, result in a bold, beautiful production.



THE OPERA
Samson et Dalila

Antony McDonald directs and designs Saint-Saëns's often derided biblical drama for Scottish Opera with Frédéric Chaslin conducting Mark Lundberg as Samson, Carolyn Sebrun as Dalila and Robert Hayward as the High Priest.

Raymond Monelle was certain. “This production is a triumph. It overcomes cliché at every turn, revealing the work as a rare masterpiece. An almost unqualified success.” Carolyn Sebrun sings with a sound like *devo* velvet... Robert Hayward is brilliantly honed, gloried *The Scotsman*. “Should do Scottish Opera's morale and their reputation a power of good... invigorating,” hailed *The Times*. “An original interpretation without destroying the essence of the piece,” saluted the *FT*. “The first two acts were thrilling... [the choral singing] was uplifting in its grandeur and expressiveness,” beamed *The Sunday Telegraph*. “Ravishing to look at and fabulously lit... it has such good components, maybe they can be made to get as the run progresses,” hoped the *Guardian*.

Edinburgh Festival Theatre (0131-529 6000) ton't, 19 & 21 June; Theatre Royal Glasgow (0141-332 9000) 29 May, 4 June; Theatre Royal Newcastle 10, 14 June.

For Raymond Monelle's rave review, see page 6. Will someone please give this outstanding production a London home? If you can't see it, buy the EMDomingo recording.



Cymbeline
By William Shakespeare

‘Adrian Noble's production has “RSC major success” stamped all over it’
Observer
‘Superb’
Times

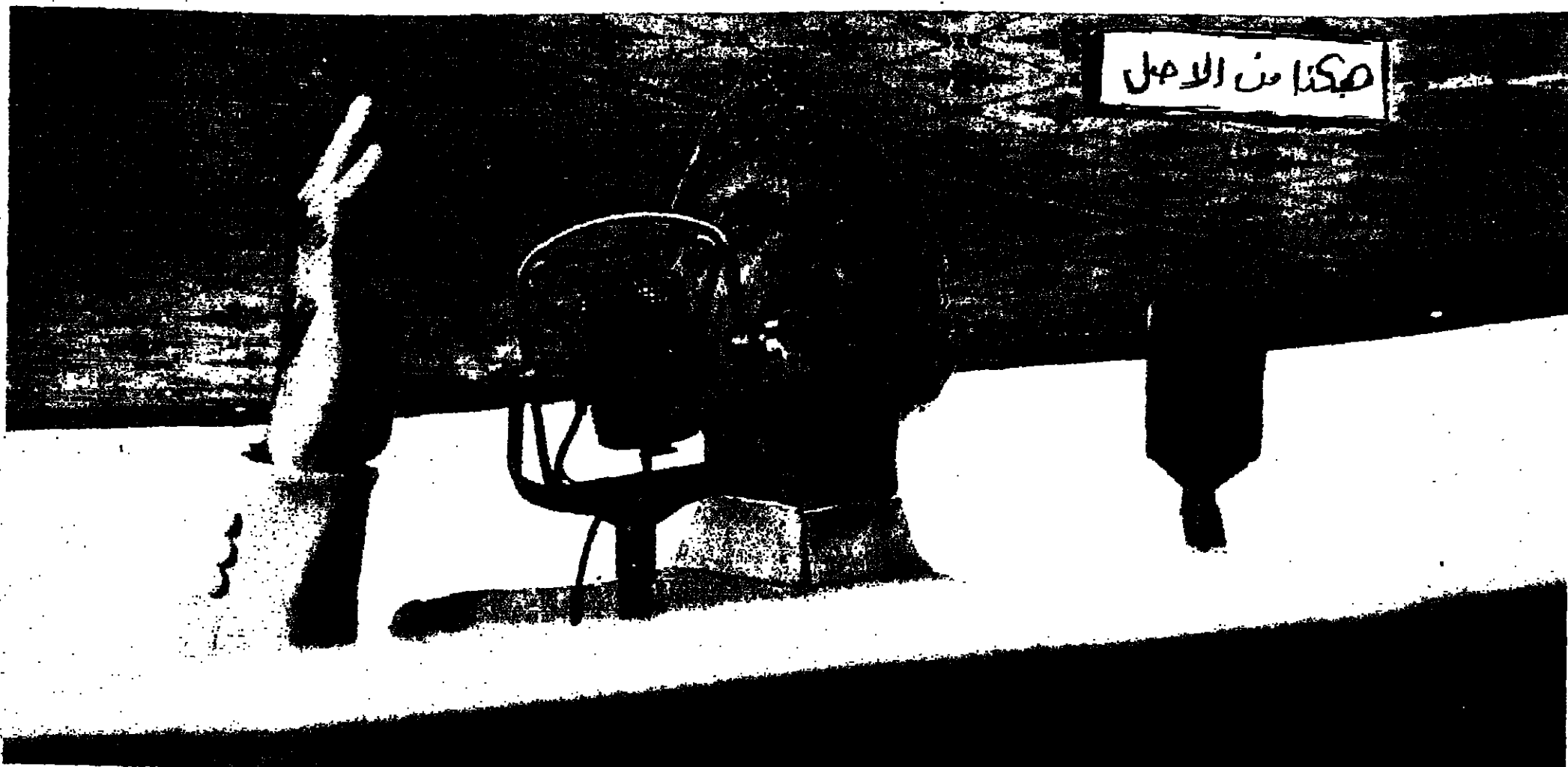
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مكتبة من الامم

Antoine de Caunes, bearded and smoking, to Bertie Wooster, Wayne's world, Pynchon's post



Splitting image: Christopher Lee as Mohammed Ali Jinnah (above) and Dracula (below, left); the Great Leader broadcasts to the nation (below, right)

PHOTOGRAPH OF LEE: MICHAEL CHURCH

Return of the living dead

Michael Church went out to Lahore to watch the Royal Shakespeare Company at work... and stumbled upon another comedy of errors, misinformation and malice that is currently dividing Pakistani opinion 50 years after Partition

There's a full moon in the blue sky, with the Hale-Bopp comet just visible on the horizon. Aeroplanes pass overhead, the muezzin brays mournfully, mobiles in the stalls mingle sweetly with the music on stage. In the arena by Lahore's Ghadafi stadium, the air is full of noise.

The Royal Shakespeare Company are presenting Tim Supple's production of *The Comedy of Errors*, and the audience is reveling in its gutsy physicality. Each time a Dromio gets beaten, or a jug of water is emptied over his elegant master, the place is convulsed. When the concubine appears - bare-armed in a red ball-dress, risqué in this devout Muslim town - there are intakes of breath. When a master is reunited with his henchman, and the bond sealed with a mouth-to-mouth kiss, the audience gasps with disbelief. When the parallel pair eye each other uncertainly, then settle for a handshake, there are sighs of relief. Homosexuality here is against the law.

This is where veiled Jimena lives obediently with Imran, while Saima Waheed hides with the man she married in defiance of her father. Here two female votes equal one male vote: inequality is the rule. The RSC beautifully brings out the sadness of exile, but what the audience latch on to are the kicks and insults of feudal dominion and family strife. As the daily papers grimly illustrate, these are the local flashpoints for violence.

It's striking how little the audience miss, despite the fact that - after Punjabi and Urdu - English is their third language. But Shakespeare's world is much closer to them than a contemporary English playwright's would be, and many know the text (the man behind me parades his erudition with loud prompts during pauses). There's a class from Lahore Girls' Grammar, Pre-Raphaelite visions in white frocks and sashes; there are groups of girls from the Islamic university, chastely enveloped in chadors. Several communities coexist in Lahore, as do three legal systems - civil law, martial law, and sharia law (mercifully not followed to the letter). This play - overshadowed from scene one by a mandatory death sentence - has something for everyone.

The reviews next day are ecstatic. "RSC enchants art-lovers" trills the headline over a piece beginning "Excellent! Marvellous! These were the remarks by each and every person present..." To check out the local fare, I see a popular comedy called *Bride for One Night* which turns on some remarkably familiar devices. The bride is beautiful, and also mad; the household she invades is full of people bursting in and out of rooms, belabouring each other, and brandishing guns. The biggest laugh comes when the aged householder - wishing to score with the "bride" - goes to the doctor for a potency cure. There are camp gents doing silly walks. The slapstick recalls the RSC's Frankie Howerd would feel at home.

He'd feel even more so at the British Council here, whose video-library has had to replace its lovingly worn-out copy of *Carry on up the Khyber* (the real thing is just up the road). The Council's work may be primarily educational, but human rights and unobedient cultural provision also loom large. The RSC's visit - following a tour of India - is the centrepiece of a programme the Council has mounted for the golden jubilee of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Since the company's visit coincides with Shakespeare's birthday, the Council celebrates in style. On carpeted lawns, and to the strains of *Cabaret* (courtesy of the brass band of the Royal Tank Regiment), Lahore's high society knock back soft drinks (or hard ones acquired from a discreet little tent that, judging by the relieved expressions of those emerging, I initially assume to be a lavatory). The British High Commissioner makes a speech of welcome; the Bishop of Lahore sails among his flock; it's a swell party. But what is James Fox doing here? And Christopher Lee, and sundry other thespians? Then it dawns: they're part of a larger, more

contentious celebration of Pakistan's first 50 years. *Jinnah* is shooting in town.

Next morning, the streets leading to the vast Badshahi Mosque are closed to traffic, but thousands of onlookers have evaded the police cordon to watch silently in the sun. This was where a lawyer called Mohammed Ali Jinnah addressed his countrymen in 1940, and where, by mass acclaim, the decision was taken to found the state of Pakistan. On the lawns beneath the walls, hundreds of turbaned tribesmen raise their fists and cheer an austere figure addressing them from a dais. It's a short, simple scene, but the extras are made to do it again and again, with the director's assistant trying vainly to prevent them straying to the water-butts. Mosquitoes lurk in the sparse

printing fresh lies about us. This campaign is his revenge. He's built it, and built it, every day." On or off camera, Lee produces the same rolling oratory: no point interrupting with questions.

"I have been described as having 'appeared in horror and sex movies'. If I've ever made a sex film, I'd like to see it. Shashi Kapoor, our narrator, who is one of the most famous Asian actors in history, has been accused of being a 'lifelong enemy of Pakistan', and there have been demands that both he and I should be deported. *The News* put it about that Farukh Dhondy, Channel 4's multicultural boss, wrote the script, that it was blasphemous, and that in it Jinnah played scenes with Saddam Hussein and the Devil. Then they said Salman Rushdie wrote it."

frailty! As he was dying of TB, it's hard to avoid."

Filming here, she says, is not like filming anywhere else. "A lot of the time we don't know what the next shot is, and the British crew have long since realised there's no point showing impatience - they've become Pakistanis. We just drift along, and things happen. On my first day, a courtroom set with 200 extras on it collapsed. Today the make-up artist looking after Nehru was off sick, and someone else made him several shades too dark, so a lot of time was lost lightening him. Some people are infuriated by this, but it's all done with the best of intentions."

Since this is the first international film to be made in Pakistan, the necessary local expertise is not present, nor are the bit-players. As a result, unlikely people are pressed into service: one of the most eminent surgeons in Karachi has done a two-line part. As Aliken points out, a lot hangs on the success of this venture: "If this film goes down, people won't make any more films in Pakistan. But it will be a great lift for the economy if they do."

On the day when news has come through that the government has stopped his grant, Ahmed himself is far from downcast. "This strengthens us, gives us more credibility," he beams. "The government's demands were completely unacceptable, and now we have the ideal compromise: support and facilities, but no strings." Moreover, he professes to be delighted by the hostile publicity. "We should pay *The News* a fee: every household in the country has heard about our film." Is he hoping to out-Gandhi Gandhi? "I believe we can take it on. This will be David and Goliath." Whereupon a great silence falls, action is called, and Jinnah-Lee once more addresses 500 off-duty soldiers masquerading as the people of Pakistan.

Back in London, Farukh Dhondy confirms that, though Channel 4 has made no commitment, he is eagerly awaiting the finished product. He had no hand in the script, but has read it and thinks it admirable. On the other hand, he was party to the decision to cast Christopher Lee: Dehlavi and Ahmed had anxiously sought his advice on whether a blacked-up white would be acceptable to Channel 4. And Dhondy too is delighted the Pakistani government has withdrawn its aid. "Who wants to buy a film sponsored by a third-world government? It will now be easier for us to co-finance." Light at the end of the tunnel.



'I've made 240 films but I've never come across anything like the problems we've met on this one'



bits of shade; the tribesmen are patient and good-humoured; tempers fray among the crew.

And also on the dais, surrounded by extras and gofers, the austere figure towering above everyone else is instantly familiar - and not just because he once played Dracula. We know this face from the portraits hanging in shops and cafes, and from the head on 10-rupee notes. This is indeed Jinnah, the Quaid-i-Azam, the Great Leader.

And Jinnah is angry. "I've made 240 films, but I've never come across anything like the problems we've met over this one. We're undermanned, under-budgeted, the entire unit has been ill, and I have the responsibility of playing the father of the nation, in the nation he created. In 50 years, believe it or not, no one has done this before, though Jinnah did make an appearance in Attenborough's *Gandhi*. There he was a satanic caricature, an appalling distortion of the truth. I've read every book I can lay my hands on, and talked to people who knew him, and he was an extraordinary man."

"I came here to play a part, but I'm also having to write letters to the president, make speeches at press conferences, defend my work on Pakistani radio and the *Voice of America*, and refute an endless stream of lies in the local press. This has nothing to do with the Pakistani people, who are being absolutely supportive. When I walk up on that dais, there is a tremendous round of applause, not just from the extras but from the people of the town. That is their way of saying thank you. And they are saying it every single day."

But on the day we arrived, there was a front-page article in a paper called *The News* attributed to a 'special correspondent' - the man didn't have the guts to print his name - asking, 'Is this man fit to play Jinnah?' and inviting readers to fax their views. It seems this journalist had once himself asked to play Jinnah, at a time when an earlier film was mooted, and he was turned down - as he should have been, because he looks as much like Jinnah as Santa Claus. For the past seven weeks, not a day has gone by without him

When I mention the theory that two versions are being made - a wars-and-all one for the West, and a hagiography for Pakistan, he explodes again. "I'm lost for words! You see: that's today's story. And there will be another tomorrow!"

But it's not just stories. An injunction - brought by a retired major - is currently hanging over the film. Despite the lack of evidence - the complainant has so far only produced newspaper cuttings to back his allegations - the court has not thrown it out. And the government's attitude is equivocal: on one hand giving the film-makers all the access they want, plus unlimited numbers of soldiers and policemen as extras; on the other, withholding the £1m grant (one third of the film's budget) that its predecessors in office had promised. The government is now letting it be known that if Kapoor departs and the script is "modified" the cash will be paid. "Excuses, excuses!" thunders Lee. "The truth is they're terrified. They're a new government, and they're covering their arse."

The script is a joint effort by the Islamic scholar Akbar Ahmed (the film's producer) and director Jamil Dehlavi. Despite an impressive record - his anti-army film *The Blood of Hussain* won a string of awards - Dehlavi is painfully tongue-tied in interview; his actors fill the gap.

Sam Dastor (who makes as convincing a Gandhi as Ben Kingsley did) previously played the Mahatma in India, and experienced there what Lee, as Jinnah, is experiencing here: deification by strangers in the street. Dastor thinks the Partition for which Jinnah fought has been a calamity, and he approves of the script's harsh treatment of Viceroy Mountbatten. "He's never been properly taken to task for the fact that he allowed a million people to be murdered in 1947." Maria Aitken - playing the sexually volatile Lady Mountbatten - agrees. "But this is a good script, in that nobody is portrayed in black and white; though with Jinnah this is creating problems. Some people here object because he's even seen to cough - evidence of

Like father, like son

THEATRE True Brit
Birmingham Rep

Just as 18 years of Tory rule crashed to an end, here's a play about a couple who fled from the values of that era early on and set up a hotel business in southern Spain. The good life is turning distinctly sour, though, when we meet this pair of ex-pats, who haven't been back to England in a decade and a half, in Ken Blakeson's *True Brit*. The practised, mine-host *bonhomie* of Frank Grimes's Charlie Martin, one-time photographer now master chef, has become a bibulous, faintly self-hating parody of itself. Resenting his current class of customer ("ex-teachers and their spreading wives"), he peoples his memories with rather more celebrities than actually ever stayed with them and he's bitter that the beautiful view has been defaced by the plastic greenhouses of an agricultural research centre which is trying to make the desert scrub fertile. Helen (Elizabeth Mansfield), his second wife and junior by some 15 years, has retreated from this disillusion into art or, as Charlie sees it, into covering endless bits of board with "nancy" paint.

The pre-season period is stirred from its stagnancy by the arrival first of Guillermo (Justin Avoth), virtually the adoptive son of the childless Martins and newly-appointed head of the research centre, and then, as paying guests, of Guy Lankester's studiously loutish Mel, a shady young British entrepreneur and his noble Ukrainian girlfriend Natalia (excellent Bonnie Engstrom), who is merely one instance of the unscrupulous way he has cleaned up in Eastern Europe. The insolent edge to Mel's behaviour - the noisy love-making, the fault-finding with the luxury fare, the flaunting of moneyed heartlessness and, in particular, his needlingly destructive interest in Guillermo's status in the household - makes it plain that he is agitating for a showdown and that Charlie's first marriage, which ended in desertion and suicide, is not going to remain a dusty closed book for long.

Blakeson's intelligent, absorbing play asks you to imagine how it would feel to meet, as a stranger out of the blue, a grown-up son whose obnoxious values are more like yours than you care to admit, once the generational adjustments have been made. "I'm not a saint, Charlie, but I'm an up-front bastard," brags Mel. Perhaps the hippy behaviour of Charlie in the late Sixties and early Seventies (leaving wife and child in order to go on the razzle with the dolly birds in Brighton) differs from the brazen, entrepreneurial hedonism of his son principally in its hypocrisy and self-deception and, besides, Mel works a hell of a lot harder for his sadistic, contractual pleasures. And how can you pride yourself on having abandoned uncaring Britain for moral reasons, if you are thereby leaving all the caring to somebody else?

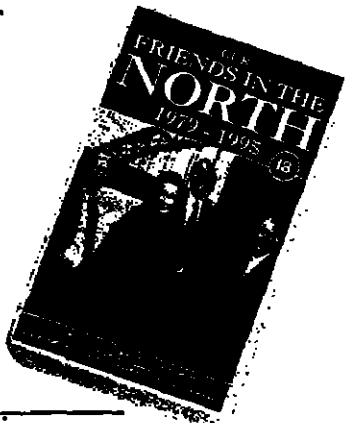
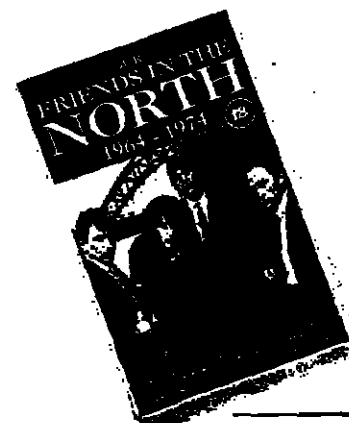
The play has its weak areas. There's just not enough circumstantial texture to the relationship between the Martins and Guillermo, for whom Helen, it is intimated, feels something more than mother love. Mel is apparently on the run from people he has antagonised while trying to engineer a lucrative metal-exporting scam in the Ukraine, but though his need for temporary sanctuary enables him to lob a telling accusation at his father ("what's a few days after all those missing years?"), there's no real attempt to generate tension over his plight. What the play does best is enable you to see a complicated mixture of right and wrong on all sides, a feature finely conveyed in Anthony Clark's engrossing production.

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Antoine de Caunes (new beard and all) gets serious about trash with Serena Mackesy

Late afternoon at a small television studio in the suburbs of Paris, and a small posse of 14-year-olds – mostly girls painted as if it were evening, with a couple of boys whose smoking, lounging, big-booted posture is betrayed by the autograph books clutched to their sides – is gathered on the pavement outside. In the gloom beyond reception, against a blue backdrop, G-Squad, (pronounce it right: djest-skud), the French Take That, are performing their mega-dance-smash, "De Haut en Bas". When one says the French Take That, that means that the band contains a Gary (lead singer, big smile, fair hair), a Robbie (though he looks disconcertingly more like the geeky guy in *Third Rock from the Sun* than Robbie, who has a disconcerting capacity to look like Norman Wisdom himself), a Jason (ponytail, falling-off shirt) and a replacement for How and Marky who has the orange skin-tones and irritating haircut of Peter Andre and the faraway facial expressions of Joe in *EastEnders*.

G-Squad hop and dip, tart the camera and do those arm movements that the Manc lads did so much better. Out in the editing suite, techies give them a background of dancing psychedelia. And as they sparkle, a slight figure in white satin shirt, fishnet singlet, zip-covered baggy trousers and giant dangling LOVE pendant appears behind them and dances across, arms flailing, in that irritating way your dad used to do before you got to have a record player in your bedroom. The figure is Antoine de Caunes, perky Gallic crumpet and television genius, and G-Squad, far from getting their big break into the British market, are being sent up on *Eurotrash*.

The eighth series of *Eurotrash* goes to air this Friday. A ninth is pencilled in for the autumn and the seventh programme in this series will be the 50th edition of the programme. *Eurotrash*, which specialises in finding the sads, mads and lads of our great Union, voice-overed by train-spotting British regional accents, remains a hot favourite with the weekend drunks lacking the cash to go on to a night-club. The last series pulled in a rating of 2.5 million, which, though it sounds like peanuts in comparison with the 23 million who tuned in for Ricky and Bianca's wedding down in Albert Square, is 25 per cent of the available audience at air-time. Not bad for a minority channel.

The secret behind the shows



That's that: G-Squad perform for Antoine de Caunes. French teenies take them seriously. 'Eurotrash' doesn't

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALASTAIR MILLER

Sads, mads and le lad

success is, broadly speaking, a formula that has been used in most of the output of Rapido, the parent company: sex, kitsch, colour and presenters who combine a twinkly casualness and satire without blinking. *The Girlie Show*, *Camel Knowledge* and the short-lived but delightful *Love in the Afternoon* issue from the same stable. De Caunes's presentation of the programme – hammed-up French accent, smooth suits, taking visible pleasure in rolling phrases like "butt-cheeks" over his tongue, is little short of inspired. The series has survived the loss of Jean-Paul Gaultier, the hyper-camp fashion designer, whose flirty chemistry with de Caunes added a surreal touch to the stream of busty blondes which is the programme's main ingredient. He is replaced in the new run by Melinda Messenger, darling of Page Three, who shared a spread in last week's *Paris Match* with the Spice Girls under dubious congratulatory for being "fiere de leur 95e et leur look de pin-up".

"It was a good duet, you know," says de Caunes during a break in filming. He has just finished interrogating Lova Moor, a former showgirl of a certain age who is marketing a scent that smells of

lavatory cleaner through French supermarkets at £10 a bottle. As they were setting up, he explained to her that "en Angleterre la serie est une serie de culture", a somewhat disingenuous explanation that caused her to preen with pride. "We were the master and the slave. I was the master, of course." And why have they replaced Jean-Paul with Melinda, another blonde among many? He smiles. "We like beautiful girls with class; that's what we enjoy. She has the perfect silhouette of the girls we want on *Eurotrash*, you know. We love Page Three girls. It's very tasty and it's what we love in life: what we expect from girls and women, you know. What's funny is that we speak of the tabloids that use these girls, and we speak the way they speak, but most of the time they hate the show. They think it's insulting."

There is something disconcerting about Antoine. It's not just his new beard – a rather Kris Kristofferson

effort he's grown in preparation for an upcoming film role – it's the combination of the familiar and the unfamiliar. I have always suspected



Boy and fantasy: de Caunes and Messenger

him of being a bit of closet intellectual, and indeed, he is working hard at taking his career away from the frivolity of television into straight film roles. What I didn't

expect is that so much of his on-screen personality would show through in life. It's like talking to a very precocious prep-school boy:

he is aware of the implications of everything his shows involve, and without doubt there is an element of subversion in everything he does, seeing how far one can push the boundaries of tat television to show up the failings of less sophisticated offerings. And yet, whenever the subject of breasts comes up, which when you're discussing a show like *Eurotrash* is often, his eyes light up like a 10-year-old behind a bike shed. He is, in some ways, a typical product of a Jesuit education, with all the convent-girls-wild preoccupations that go with it. "Breasts? Well, they are beautiful." Even those of

Lolo, regular guest and a woman who single-handedly halved the European silicone lake? "No, not Lolo's breasts. You can't call them breasts any more. But she knows

the limits. She does regard herself as a pastiche." Those round fox's eyes shine with enthusiasm as he warms to his subject. "Once there was a competition to find the world's biggest breasts. Lolo had a challenger from America, who came on Concorde to take part. And one of her breasts exploded because of the cabin pressure. It would have been a good story for *Eurotrash*." Ideal.

The thing is, de Caunes is a considerably more serious character than the British public has seen evidence of. He is, for a start, president of the French Aids charity, Solidarité SIDA. His show, *Nulle Part Ailleurs*, which ran daily for seven years, was more straight than not, though dotted with satirical skits. He wrote the lion's share – 90 minutes' worth every day – himself.

This is a man, it seems, whose boredom threshold is painfully low. He has a reputation as a workaholic – rumours of 20-hour days have circulated – but a lot of this comes from being in possession of a restless brain. "I don't know how to make the frontier between work and pleasure. I work a lot because I'm always working on new projects which are very exciting. I don't feel it like it's working too much." For

relaxation, he reads – "I'm a big fan of Robert Louis Stevenson: I think he'd be one of the greatest writers of all time, along with Dumas, Maurice LeBlanc, with Stendhal. And I read a lot of background stuff. I've been reading a lot of Jewish novels recently. And I love American novels" – and rides his bike around Trouville, where he lives.

Not that there's much time for that. The de Caunes diary is, as always, crowded. *La Divine Pour-suite*, a film by Michel de Vill, opened in France on 30 April. "It's from a Donald Westlake novel, *Dancing Aztecs*. It's always stories of people running after something and not exactly knowing what they're running after. It's always very sham-holic. I am trying to purchasing a gold statue coming from Africa that's been smuggled. And there are some burglars running after us. It's part comedy, part straight."

Meanwhile, he is about to enter a two-month shoot of a film called *L'Homme est une Femme comme les Autres*. "It's very different. First of all it's a leading role and we'll be shooting every day for two months. It's the story of a gay Jewish guy who has to marry a girl. It's a kind of edgy comedy." It also sounds like it bears more than a passing resemblance to Jaime Humberto Hermosillo's 1986 movie *Dona Herlinda and her Son*, but we'll let that pass.

Television, it seems, is rapidly becoming a thing of the past: over the past year, he has cut his small-screen commitments down to *Eurotrash* and presenting the French César awards. He has no intention of ditching *Eurotrash* for the time being. "I love it. It's very easy. It's like recreation time. I like being able to work in England. I can't say I particularly like French TV. They're two opposite worlds. French TV is very conventional." Lolo totters past us to the head of the stairs, looking like she has quadruplets strapped to her chest. The sight of her, gripping the hand rail to keep her balance, suddenly fills me with gloom. Does he never find this stream of freaks depressing? "Yes," he says, "but life is a circus, you know. We only show the edge. If you take it seriously, yes, it's a bit depressing. But we made a choice to have fun with it. There are enough reasons to get depressed in life. This is showbusiness. And anyway – that giggly grin comes back – "as long as I can hurt morals and well-thinking people. I enjoy it. It's a good enough reason to make the show, you know?"

NEXT WEEK IN

THE INDEPENDENT SUGGS

He used to have a band called Madness, then he didn't. And long before that, there was lots of plain madness, enough to drive you crazy. Suggs has a bizarre story to tell to Deborah Ross



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THE INDEPENDENT IT IS...ARE YOU?

Philistine, moi?

OPERA Samson et Dalila Edinburgh Festival Theatre

Because of the popularity of Delilah's "Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix", Saint-Saëns's biblical opera is widely thought of as an orgy of sensuality. It is nothing of the kind. With the composer's extraordinary ear for every kind of music – the score virtually quotes Wagner, Berlioz, Gounod and Mendelssohn – the work is a fabulously rich amalgam of earnest drama, near-oratorio and sublime lyricism.

Scottish Opera, in its new production, has decided to ignore the popular view and go for high drama and musical breadth. Antony McDonald is chiefly known as a designer, but here acted as producer as well; paradoxically, his hand was chiefly visible in the formal and balletic movements of both chorus and principals, played out in sets that were rudimentary, merely oblique platforms with a distant view of a starry sky or of the Negev desert. Lit with pinkish side-lights by Wolfgang Göbbel, McDonald visualised the Jews as Polish victims of the Holocaust, mocked and ridiculed by an Abimelech (the warm and virile Christopher Purves) dressed like a Nazi brownshirt. The initial image was telling: rows of sleeping Jews in a bare hall, reminiscent of Auschwitz. Neither of the notorious *coups de théâtre* – the cutting of Samson's hair, the destruction of the temple – was seen on stage.

McDonald has the right cast for this conception. His Samson is Mark Lundberg, an immense tenor with one of those smoky, husky voices, baritone in everything but range, fathomless in expressive depth. Robert Hayward is a young-looking High Priest, with a black, high-calibre bass-baritone that leaves you feeling like you've been hit by a tank. Above all, Delilah herself (Carolyn Sebron) is not the remotest bit seductive. This magnificent singer, with her stately presence and commanding gestures, sees the role as a relentless narrative of hatred and revenge. Her voice has edge and colour and she phrases rhetorically, expansively, never descending to mere sensuality. Samson is a fool to overlook the steel in her tone, even when she is declaring love and fidelity.

Perhaps the best stroke was to appoint a conductor, Frédéric Chaslin, who not only imposes his grand vision on every aspect of the performance, but also sees the score as an essentially musical sequence, rather than a mere accompaniment to stage action. Stern counterpoint, fragrant hymnody, symphonic density are cherished and moulded, placing the work on the borderline of opera and symphony. And when the composer allows himself a moment of lyric beauty, space and sunlight open up around it, allowing the singers every luxury of projection and *sostenuto*.

There are errors of taste. The ballet music in Act 3 accompanies an incoherent, slightly salacious tableau of stage business, and the Philistine women, dressed in the fashions of 1900, show their legs like street-corner tarts. But all in all, this production is a triumph. It overcomes cliché at every turn, revealing the work as a rare masterpiece. Edinburgh Festival Theatre tonight (0131 529 6000) and on tour

Raymond Monelle

Rollin' with it

POP Steve Winwood Hanover Grand, London

It's a get-on-down kind of night, and if you don't like what you're hearing, you'd just better button your lip. Arriving late to an intimate and overfilled venue (Steve returns later this summer to play Wembley) surrounded by vintage Bentleys, Jags and assorted rock star cars complete with chauffeurs, I muscle upstairs to the VIP area, the only place left to see from. It is chocky with Steve's family and friends. "I can see what you're writing," says one beautiful woman, brandishing a talon. "And it's better good." Sometimes, you wish you'd bothered to learn shorthand.

Not necessarily tonight, though, because what's going on is quite cool. There's an odd sense of the gravity-defying about little Stevie. At its best, his music is grittily uplifting, still all about the full-throttle sweat of R&B/psychodelia he pioneered (this is a man who can meld uncannily with a Hammond organ); and, though the chap's nearly 50, he still retains the quirky, slightly fey beauty of yesteryear. Some feat, since this is a rock 'n' roll baby who played big-band and Dixieland jazz at the age of eight, alongside his clarinetist dad, in the Ron Atkinson Band. By 12, on stage with his unfortunately nicknamed sibling, Muff, he was singing like Ray Charles on helium. At 16, he scored Stacy hits with the Spencer Davis Group; in his twenties, doped out of his mind, he was mixing prog-rock and psychedelia in

Traffic (remember "Hole In My Shoe", all about a big albatross?). When he finally found a solo career, he made radio-friendly AOR credible with "Valerie" and "Higher Love", white-soul nonpareils.

The new album, *Junction Seven*, looks good on paper, with contributions from Narada Michael Walden, Jim Capaldi, Nile Rodgers, Lenny Kravitz and Des'ree. On CD, to be honest, it's a disappointment – slightly bland variations on 1986's *Back in the High Life*. In his natural habitat, however, a cramped and smoky club, Winwood made it move. The sound was flattened by the Hanover's low ceiling, the band – all at least half his age – were technically proficient, but multi-instrumentalist Winwood fired the set. He kicked off with "I'm a Man", soaked in brass and Hammond B3, his voice – half Marvin Gaye, half Roland Gift – scratching against the police siren wails of two cat-like Diana Rosses.

New tracks were buzzed up with salsa, Philly and jazz-funk, and sounded pretty much as good as what you'd come hoping to hear: the arch romance of "While You See a Chance", the edgy R&B of "Keep On Runnin'" and "Gimme Some Lovin'". He must've played this last song a time or two, but his hypnotic, insidious riff still makes him contort his face in an orgasmic, lip-biting rictus. I don't think he was the only one.

Glyn Brown

DEPENDENT LONG WEEKEND

at's that: Squad perform r Antoine de ames. French onies take am seriously. Atrocity can't

PHOTOGRAPH: STANLEY MILLER

SATURDAY 3 MAY 1997 • THE INDEPENDENT LONG WEEKEND

books

كتاب من الامم

7

Snoblesse oblige

Owen Dudley Edwards scorns the Irish chieftain who succumbed to radical chic



A blast from the Eurosceptics: revolutionary France revisited by Thomas Rowlandson in a print published by the Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Prosperity against the Republicans and Levellers. In Diana Donald's 'The Age of Caricature' (Yale University Press, £45)

Lost in France

Carole Angier acclaims the magical debut by a Russian Proust

Le Testament Français by Andrei Makine, translated by Geoffrey Strachan, Scribner, £15.99

When the young Russian narrator of *Le Testament Français* is about 14, he forms a strange friendship with the other pariah of his class, the dunce Pashka. He watches him fish through the ice of the Volga; afterwards, by their fire on the snowy bank, he tells tales of knights and battles. One day he retells a poem instead, about a young boy determined to die in a Parisian uprising. Incredibly, Pashka leaps barefoot into the snow, trying to hide his tears. This, the narrator says, was the happiest day of his youth, which gave him his image of true literature: Pashka's blue legs thrust into a snowdrift, and the reflections of the flames in his moist eyes.

This novel is about such images and moments, and consists of them. It is about the true literature glimpsed that day; which, the narrator later discovers, is dead in France now. In fact it is dead in most times and places, since it is great literature, necessary and profound. Andrei Makine aims at such literature himself. And – in a leap as incredible as Pashka's – he achieves it. *Le Testament Français* is the first book ever to win both the Prix Goncourt and the Prix Médicis, and it deserves them.

We first meet the narrator when he is a child. We never learn his name, or what he looks like; but we inhabit his mind more intensely than any boy's mind since Marcel's in *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Proust's themes of time, literature and loss are Makine's; Proust's search for the eternal in the evanescent is his search; Proust's division between art and life, Swann's way and the Guermantes' way, is his division; and Proust's images – the twin spires, the madeleine, the phrase of music – inspire Makine's revived moments.

The boy we meet is Russian, but has a French grandmother. In the winter he speaks Russian in a Siberian city which has abolished the past, and is out of bounds to foreigners. But every summer he and his sister visit the grandmother, Charlotte, in a dusty town on the edge of the steppe. Here they speak French; they explore Charlotte's suitcase of French newspapers; they sit on her narrow, flower-

covered balcony and listen to her memories of France.

This doubleness splits the boy in two. He becomes an observer, a visionary. France becomes his *Lost Domain* and, later, it becomes Eros to him. Only in French can he say, he "died in the arms of his mistress", or imagine "the rhythmic stirring of the water" when a master lifts a shivering maid from her bath. The intensity of his despair as he contemplates all the lost moments in lost lives, and of his joy when he relives such moments – these lift us up, shivering, too. We float with him on the little balcony above the steppe, watching his rich visions.

Still later, in adolescence, he briefly succumbs to the need to belong, to live in "real life" without other times and places. But if, for a short time, the story becomes more ordinary, the writing doesn't. As the boy gives up France and becomes "Russian", he is also becoming a man; and the passages in which he recognises in himself the possibility of raping and even killing a woman, and beats himself mercilessly for it, are among the most astounding in this astounding book.

What we have been following, of course, is the growth of a writer. His agonised and ecstatic pursuit of the past has also been the pursuit of a "new language" in which to express its recovery, a novelist's "language of amazement". And when we meet him in the last part, he has become a novelist. As he was once a French outsider in Russia, now he is a Russian outsider in France. He survives this poverty and humiliation by dreaming of bringing Charlotte back to France, and by working on a book called *Charlotte Lemonnier: Biographical Notes*.

You do not want to know (but perhaps can guess) whether Charlotte ever returns. But the *testament Français* is hers, and instead of leaving the narrator an inheritance, it takes away the one he thought he had. That is the last meaning of *Le Testament Français*: that this book, like all great books, was written not because something was possessed – a home, a history – but because it has been lost, and must be reimagined.

Attila, she said at length. That's the name. Attila the Hun. Eh?

I was trying to think who you reminded me of. Somebody who went about screwing ruin and desolation and breaking up homes which, until he came along, had been happy and peaceful. Attila is the man. It's amazing," she said, drinking me in once more. "To look at you, one would think you were just an ordinary sort of amiable idiot – certifiable, perhaps, but quite harmless. Yet, in reality, you are a worse scourge than the Black Death." (P G Wodehouse, *Right Ho, Jeeves*)

Bertie Wooster, if he ever existed, was killed round about 1915," asserted Orwell bleakly. Stella Tillyard's new biography of Lord Edward Fitzgerald acquaints us with a Bertie Wooster killed in 1798. Orwell would probably have contemplated him with a sour gratification. Fitzgerald, son of the Duke of Leinster, descendant of greedy aristocrats enriched by the labour of their dependents for 600 years, threw in his fortunes with a new order intended to bloom from blood shed by underlings.

Orwell would have been reminded of the snoblesse oblige public-school Stalinists of his own day. The ruling

Citizen Lord: Edward Fitzgerald, 1763-1798 by Stella Tillyard, Chatto, £16.99

class intends to rule, whatever their label. Fitzgerald married the putative daughter of Philippe, Duke of Orleans, regicide cousin of Louis XVI, father of Louis Philippe. She was charming; so was her husband. Charm, and what Jane Austen would call the condescension of his support for the French Revolution and its satellite, the United Irishmen, won him a place in the romantic nationalist pantheon.

Was it... for this Edward Fitzgerald died? sneered W B Yeats about Irish-Catholic bourgeois philistinism in his poem "September 1913". It was not, but however greedy and heartless "this" could be, it was better than the French-puppet regime for which Fitzgerald actually died (and killed). Ireland was a late interest in his turbulent 34-year life. He toyed with a little Gaelic and ploughmanship after returning to Ireland in 1793. It gave his revolutionary support-group a local habitation.

And birth had given him a local name. Stella Tillyard's vigorous and absorbing text is richly documented, but makes little more of the lineage than the Wooster ancestors recalled by Bertie as doing dashed well at

Crécy. Neither did Edward Fitzgerald: the French Revolution abolished the past. But his claim on the Irish imagination of his own time and since was ancestral.

Tillyard vaguely pictures the medieval Fitzgeralds oscillating between "pragmatic gestures of loyalty to the English Crown and spectacular acts of defiance that allowed them to claim a distinct Irish identity". These were frequently the same thing, depending on which English Crown the Fitzgeralds might loyally gesture towards.

In the late 15th century, their Great Earl, Garret Mor, trapezoid from the Yorkists to Henry VII via the pretender Lambert Simnel. They were neither English nor Irish in loyalty: they were Fitzgeralds. They made alliances, marital or otherwise, with Gael and Norman, French or English, as seemed best to their interests.

The trouble was that their interests were all too readily identified with Irish malice by their opponents. The Irish Parliament of Tudor times was brought under English control chiefly to limit Fitzgerald power. They made the best of new times,

having to be bought off with a dukedom in the end; but as Tillyard shows, they could not be bought on a long lease.

Lord Edward's immediate relatives moved over to oppositions; and his own choice of an opposition regime, as well as party, showed more ancestral fidelity than his trendy Francophilia implied.

His mother had shaped him for such receptivity. She educated her child according to the theoretical principles of Rousseau (as opposed to the practical ones, whereby Rousseau sent his own offspring to the foundling hospital).

Edward grew up the friend of mankind. He was even more a friend than a slave-master to his own Jeeves, a South Carolina black named Tony, who saved him from the battlefield where Lord Edward had been wounded serving against the American rebels.

Stella Tillyard sensibly seeks to write Tony into her narrative, but his philanthropic master grew sparser in reference to him as the great French revolutionary cause took over. By the end, her dutiful Tonyisms begin to sound like the more mechanical passages of Harriet Beecher Stowe. Fitzgerald's own children were packed off to his mother.

with it

Love you to death

Victoria Radin travels in Diaperland and meets a lethal Lolita

Love Invents Us by Amy Bloom, Picador, £15.99

A few years ago Amy Bloom, who is an American psychoanalyst, published a collection of short stories which covered the waterfront as far as bad behaviour is concerned. *Come to Me* encompassed, in sleek pared-down prose, a transvestite hairdresser who wears a blonde wig to make joyous love with his super-conventional client; a woman who conducts a long affair with the blessing of her husband, her lover's best friend; the sexual liaison of a stepson with his stepmother; a psychoanalyst who mates a client with her divorced son. What was graceful about these stories – which resembled case studies less rather than more than a lot of fiction – was the balance and compassion of the writing: their generosity and refusal to take sides.

Two of the stories were somewhat less copiously endowed with these qualities. Curiously, it is these that Bloom selects as the bookends for her first novel. The story that, virtually unchanged, forms the first chapter of *Love Invents Us* is narrated by a chubby suburban primary-school girl who gets her first taste of power by taking off her clothes and modelling the wares of a middle-aged furrier. A good deal of facile sniping at her aspiring and emotionally absent parents seeps through the self-conscious and often smart-ass tone of voice. There is even, camouflaged under a derisively stiff upper lip, a note of self-pity.

One finds oneself padding, one oar short of a punt, toward Diaperland, that intensely American island first sighted by J D Salinger, and colonised, with varying degrees of

malevolence, by the Sylvia Plath of *The Bell Jar*, Jayne Anne Phillips, Mona Simpson and now, it seems, by Kathryn Harrison's *The Kiss*. It is the world of the clever child as conceived by the adult and it lies close to archness and a cosmology of grievances.

Following the furrier, Elizabeth takes up with her English teacher at junior high school. Her age would be about 12; her lover is well aware of the literary antecedent. For all that she cannot bear his touch, nor the sight of his pitilessly described flesh, she is screwing him by the time she is 15. Or, one gathers, he is stroking and she is permitting, for she excels at eliciting the devotion you get when you withhold and manipulate. There is a minutely-described but unprurient scene in which the saggy Max, whose shoulders sprout grey hairs and dark freckles, uses a vibrator on Elizabeth, who responds in Cinemascope. Perhaps Max does it to gain some kind of power for himself; certainly to provoke some kind of sexual reaction. At any rate, it misfires.

Elizabeth is soon more properly in love with a fabulously-bodied black baseball player and spinning accounts of delicious adolescent sexuality. Nevertheless, the girl again withholds herself, this time through fear of pregnancy.

Where does the author stand in relation to her narrator? If the solution is meant to be found in the next section, which moves from Elizabeth's jerky verbal scrapbook to the third person, it doesn't work. Max, a quite knowing Humbert, takes the limelight, obscuring the squeaky timbre of the girlie voice



Amy Bloom: "world of the clever child as conceived by the adult"

Bloom has so effortlessly conceived. The author is more at ease here, rewarding us with Max's Nabokovian sense of irony. Bloom also lets rip with a stream of pithy observations on love, which is intrinsically obsessive and never many miles away from perversity. We can't choose

those we love. It costs. Max dies of it. Elizabeth, who becomes a "burn-out" at 24, returns to help him die because even that is preferable to being alone.

We last see her at 40: hair home-dyed to cover the grey; single parent from a one night stand; suburban,

tepid and contented. She is nearly unrecognisable, but perhaps that is the message. Or perhaps it is the result of authorial transference or authorial character-fatigue. Although there are many golden nuggets in this novel, the best of Bloom's stories held more roundedness and depth.

The classic novel filmed in Ambridge

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Bogie sold baby food and Duke hated horses

Roger Clarke finds out what a man's gotta do to become a movie myth

John Wayne: the politics of celebrity by Garry Wills, Faber, £20
Bogart: a life in Hollywood by Jeffrey Meyers, Deutsch, £17.99

Marion and Humphrey are still the couple who best define Hollywood masculinity. California-raised John Wayne (né Marion Morrison) embodies the lumbering green beret, Davy Crockett and most of all the cowboy. New Yorker Humphrey Bogart was slick urban man, inhabiting the world of gangsters and tuxedo-suited wise-guys. Both were men's men, and both were masquerading – Wayne as a being of light and Bogart as a being of darkness, when in real life the opposite was true. If Wayne really was "the American Adam", in the words of his new biographer, then Bogart was Cain, the troubled soul, the founder and inventor of the cityscape.

When, at the beginning of Wayne's career in the 1930s, director Raoul Walsh tried to fit him into the then customary moccasin, slightly effete version of a cowboy hero, it was a disaster. The same hopeless miscasting happened with Bogart's early roles as a tennis-playing romantic lead. As a result, both actors took a while to be noticed. John Ford initially thought Wayne a limited character actor; Jack Warner thought the same thing of Bogart.

In Gary Wills's new biography, we are reminded again of all the things that don't add up about Wayne. In real life, he hated horses, avoided the draft and snobbishly aspired to join the Social Register of Los Angeles. Yet he remains the model for the all-American aspirant. The general who chairs the Joint Chiefs

of Staff, John Shalikashvili, taught himself English by watching Wayne movies. Newt Gingrich, as a teenager, spent hours copying the Wayne walk (did his lesbian sister do so too?).

But there's a long and dangerous history of walking the Wayne walk. Presidents Nixon and Reagan took their cues from Wayne whenever they felt like revenging the Alamo on the Far and Middle East. One US critic went so far as to suggest that Wayne's spirit of bravado so infected the leaders of America that it drew the country into the Vietnam conflict. "I gave my dead dick for John Wayne," claimed paralytic-from-the-waist-down Vietnam vet Ron Kovic – the paraplegic played by Tom Cruise in Oliver Stone's *Born on the Fourth of July*. Wayne, constantly humiliated in public by John Ford for not serving in the armed forces, didn't represent America as such in films like *Green Berets*. He merely represented its unquenchable thirst for toy wars.

Jeffrey Meyers's *Bogart: A Life in Hollywood* is less terrifying in its fantasies. There are no vistas in Bogart movies, no lands to be conquered, no country to be created and sustained. A New York WASP born, like Katherine Hepburn, a surgeon father and suffragette mother, Bogart had to cope with the dark side of life sooner rather than later – his father's morphine addiction and a sister's insanity, for example. He was also a celebrity all his life: his mother, a commercial artist, immortalised Bogie's baby face for



A hat trick by Clifton Webb (centre), Humphrey Bogart and Laurence Olivier, taken from 'Hollywood, A Photo Memoir' by Jean Howard (Abrams, £18.95)

Mellins Baby Food. Kicked out of school, he got his trademark scar on his lip while in service with the navy. (He made a more convincing film sailor than Wayne made a film soldier for the simple reason that he had been one.)

Bogart's fictive realm is still powerful. His fellow New Yorkers Woody Allen and Abel Ferrara have included homages to Bogart's European-style *chiaroscuro* in their movies. Thus Ferrara's recent *The Funeral* opens with a thrilling close-up of Bogart in a gangster role. We see the mafia hood played by Christopher Walken learning not the Wayne walk but the Bogart finger-stabbing sneer – not Wayne's expansive use of space but Bogart's economy. It's hard to imagine a modern film-maker making the same use of Wayne. Though his screen personae exemplify simplicity, he carries overwhelming cultural baggage, and no longer even belongs to

the movies. John Wayne is real.

These are very different biographies. Wills is a seasoned cultural critic, and his writing is self-confident and entertaining, with many New Yorker style verbal flourishes. There's little about Wayne the man here, and almost no domestic psychology at all. I found it hard, though, to work out exactly where he was coming from and what his beef might be. Is he for or against Wayne?

Meyers on Bogart is more conventional. A well-known biographer of writers, he reveals a desire to compare Bogart with Hemingway that becomes part of an irritating literary tic. Yet when Hemingway finally pops up as a friend of Bogart's, the friendship is bafflingly not described, in spite of the lengthy prologue that details spurious links (both their fathers had offices "on the first floor") between writer and actor. Equally irritating is the seepage of bits

from Meyers's other biographies. Who cares if the Bogart marriage was like that of Frieda and D H Lawrence, and what is the origin of the notion that the plot of *Dark Victory* borrows from Lawrence's novella *St Mawr*? Such comparisons have no meaning to anyone except Meyers himself in his private scholastic universe.

Wills tries to argue that Wayne is a genuine icon overlooked by culture snobs – but icons are flawed intercessors of grace rather than deities themselves. Perhaps Wayne is symbol rather than icon, and a symbol for very crass things that have little to do with film.

Bogart will always continue to appeal to film buffs, and it's easy to see why. He is a complex being composed of bad and good, a synthesis, a creature of psychic drama. Wayne is merely a proposition: an kind of imperial cipher, with no more or less meaning than the Stars and Stripes itself.

Paperbacks



By Christopher Hirst and Emma Hagestadt

Life on Mars by Alexander Stuart (Black Swan, £6.99) After being commissioned in 1990 to profile boxer Nigel Benn in Florida, Stuart never got round to using the return air ticket. His highly enjoyable memoir of Miami is charged with the steamy eccentricity and sexiness of this most un-American of US cities. Stuart's new chums include a drag star and a reflective part-time gangster. But far more scary than the fleshpots of Miami Beach is a phantasmagoric visit to Disneyworld.

Australia coming of age. Central to the story is the heated sporting rivalry with the mother-country. Victorious so often, the "Don" was thwarted during the "Bodyline" series of 1933. "We nearly didn't do it," admitted the English captain Jardine. "That little man was bloody good."

The Innocence of Roast Chicken by Jo-Anne Richards (Review, £6.99) Honeyed portage and swimming pools is how Kate remembers her Sixties childhood in the Eastern Cape. But 20 years on, and even with the end of apartheid in sight, life has never quite matched up. Refusing to wear ANC T-shirts, or share her husband's euphoria at the new era's arrival, she almost pushes her marriage to the edge. As coming of age stories go, this isn't one of the greats, but it's nice to see South Africa through the eyes of a younger generation.

Dinosaur in a Haystack by Stephen Jay Gould (Penguin, £9.99) The 34 essays in Gould's seventh collection maintain an astonishing level of polymathic curiosity. In three neighbouring examples, Gould explores an unexpected best-seller by Edgar Allan Poe called *The Conchologist's First Book*; explains why printers traditionally portray right-handed shells the wrong way round; and trashes *Jurassic Park*. From the most arcane research, he reveals the astonishing diversity of nature and the fallibility of its interpreters.

Bradman by Charles Williams (Abacus, £7.99) This acclaimed biography of cricket's greatest star will enthrall even those who are perplexed by the game. Williams combines his subtle portrait of this shy, reluctant hero with a vivid account of

Flamingo Book of New Scottish Writing 1997 (£5.99) Luckily not all the stories in this year's collection are quite as spunky as John Aberdien's "Spermy McClung" – of which an dinnage is a single snappit out until all red out loud. More direct are Paula Fitzpatrick's story about a woman told to "bugger off" when she attempts small talk in a maternity ward, and Leslie Hill's tale of an old dear who ends it all. Thelma and Louise style, by driving off the end of a pier into the sea.

Verse under fire

Independent choice: European poetry by Michael Glover

Do extreme circumstances – experiencing war at first hand, or living under the heel of some villain like Ceausescu – help to generate great poetry? Not necessarily. On the other hand, there's no denying that putting sensitive blooms under the cosh can help to get the best out of them from time to time. Look what a bit of bruising reality on the Western Front did for that sometime neo-Keatsian Wilfred Owen, for example, during the last year of his life.

Four European poets with new volumes published here have all made poems in the teeth of barbarous public behaviour. The Bosnian Serb Goran Simic survived, with his Muslim wife and two small children, the terrible three-year siege of Sarajevo. The Romanian poet Liliana Ursu was refused permission to travel. That great long-distance runner of German poetry, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, grew up in Nazi Nuremberg. And the Serbian poet Vasko Popa, who died before the collapse of Tito's Yugoslavia, had nonetheless lived through three years of a vicious civil war in the 1940s.

All this may seem rather envious to western poets, who (in Calvino's words) live in societies where literature is allowed to vegetate as an



Pick of the week
Sprinting from the Graveyard

'Look what a bit of bruising reality did for Wilfred Owen'

innocuous pastime, never regarded as threatening or risky. In the west, poetry is a private diversion, no more destabilising than doing something different on the allotment this spring.

Simic's concrete backyard was strewn with skulls and ordure. The English poems that David Harsent has made from the Serbo-Croatian originals in *Sprinting from the Graveyard* (Oxford, £7.99) are harsh, fractured and quite frightening – like the taste of rusted metal in the mouth. In one poem, Simic speaks of his wish to have his poems come as close to unembellished reportage as possible. This is how they

read – seemingly jagged and fragmentary, as if they were not the well-made poems that attention reveals them to be but notes tied to a piece of ragged string hanging down from some shattered window.

Harsent's method of translation – if you can call common sense a method – has helped to bring these poems into English in an utterly convincing way. Beginning with prose cribs, he has sought not so much to make slavishly faithful reproductions of the originals but new poems in English out of all this horror, wrenching, twisting, howling like some poet-magpie.

Michael Hamburger's approach to Enzensberger in his new collection *Kiosk* (Bloodaxe, £7.95) has been quite different. Hamburger is an expert translator from the German, who produced the same poet's excellent *Selected Poems* for Bloodaxe three years ago. He behaves like a master mimic – or like some dancer's shadow on the wall. Hamburger follows not only the elegant shapeliness of Enzensberger's public arguments about human reason and justice, the unnatural nature of rational behaviour. He also carries into English, by means of rhythm and stanza-shaping, the way that Enzensberger conceives his effects across the entire canvas of a poem. It's also pleasing that Bloodaxe is keeping up to date with the output of such an important European poet – *Kiosk* was first published as recently as 1995.

Something has gone a little wrong with *The Sky Behind the Forest* (Bloodaxe, £7.95). Liliana Ursu's collection-length debut in English,

It reads in part like a failure on the part of its co-translators, Tess Gallagher and Adam J Sorkin. What exactly is wrong here? For a start, Ursu is a poet of great personal intensity, passionate about the state and its wrongdoings, equally passionate about the things of the flesh. Too often this comes over into English as a kind of unshapely gush of feelings.

The translators, desperate to keep up with the poet's restless shifts of metaphor, seldom convince the reader that any particular turn of phrase is the apposite one. The result is that the poems too often meander along in a somewhat humdrum fashion. Though the images may be sharp, the rhythms are too often broken-backed.

Vasko Popa's *Collected Poems* (translated by Anne Pennington and revised by Francis R Jones, Anvil, £25) read rather like the sudden, shocking appearance of a box by the artist Joseph Cornell. They compose a small and perfectly functioning meta-world set in our much larger context of human relationships, political shenanigans and general throat-clearings.

There are two reasons for this: an addiction to the coded language of parable favoured by many of those embattled Eastern European poet-hero types so beloved of and envied by the likes of Al Alvarez, and a passionate engagement with the beguilingly obscure myths and mysteries of Serbian folk literature. If anyone wanted to know where Ted Hughes's *Crow* came from, they could do worse than start from Vasko Popa.

A modem miss from cyberspace

Cosmo Landesman is won over by the digital dream scene

Hard, Soft & Wet by Melanie McGrath, HarperCollins, £16.95

Hard, Soft & Wet is the story of one woman's love affair with digital culture. America, Youth, Modernity, a computer called Apple and a boy called Mac. Judging this book by its coverline – "the digital generation comes of age" – I was quick to conclude that here's one for every cyber-bore in Britain. But I was wrong. McGrath is such a good writer that even a cynical Luddite like me could love her book.

Visiting America, Melanie discovers computer culture and quickly becomes a born-again cyber-babe. Clearly, online chat and other technopopies filled an existential hole in her world. "I must have felt the need to join in the game ... fill up the empty hours ... of my adult life."

Although she goes through a brief period of computer addiction, it's the digital dream she's really hooked on; the promise of a bright, brilliant future full of infinite possibility. And that future is being forged now by a new generation. The book's premise is simple: if you wanna see tomorrow, then check out the hi-tech kids of today.

That's exactly what McGrath has done. She's created a travel book that's all about looking for a faraway country called the future.

for us to experience strange places and people from the safety and sloth of home?

As a tour guide, McGrath is a state-of-the-art VR helmet. (Her best friend Nancy – one of the most vivid and likeable people in the book – actually turns out to be a composite, a virtually real person). She has a sharp ear and eye for dialogue and detail: "I flip through Nancy's manual of the Net ... but soon find myself struggling for comprehension ... ftp, tcp, pop, ppp. I mean, what is all that? It sounds like radio interference." She also has – which net-heads never have – a nice dry sense of humour. When Nancy contemplates a future where "the digital revolution is just a rerun of *The Stepford Wives*", McGrath replies, "Well, whatever happens they can't take baking and periods from us."

It must have been tempting for her to stay at home, sit in front of her screen and see the world. But like an old-fashioned reporter she decides to go out and talk to people on this new frontier for herself – which itself admits the limitations of computer power. With McGrath, we get the digital grand tour – Silicon Valley, MIT, interactive cinemas, Internet Cafés in Iceland, amusement arcades in Bristol, techno clubs in East Berlin and the computer bandit scene in Moscow.

We meet Alex, a three-year-old who doesn't know the



Melanie McGrath: 'lost her religion and found herself'

alphabet yet but can navigate around star systems in virtual reality. There's Isaac – another "futuristic prototype" – who at 14 has his own computer consultancy business; and then there's a whole army of young techno-pagans, hackers, arcade hustlers, virus programmers, geeks and sadists.

So what are tomorrow's adults like? Are they a new breed? Sweet kids or scary monsters? McGrath is too smart to go in for simple generalisations – which doesn't exactly help the book's premise, but never mind. To me they seem a freaky cocktail of the puerile and precocious. The trouble with this generation is that they sit around saying things like, "Every time you have a thought it's like new universes are created and there's an infinite number of

universes bifurcating and it's a Telsa." It all sounds like geek to me.

Instead of this portrait-of-a-generation stuff, I preferred the story of McGrath's own life. Usually revolutions like the digital one begin with a bang and end in a backlash. And there has been a growing literature of digital disenchantment. But this book is not another one of those American Been-There-Don't-That-It-Sucks polemics.

The older and wiser McGrath concludes, "The Net is a Peter Pan machine, the screech and the bubble of the modern always promising some new identity, some novel reconstruction." McGrath hasn't burned out and become angry; she's simply grown up, lost her religion and found herself.

Fans have been waiting 25 years for Thomas Pynchon's period epic. Was it worth it? Yes, argues Zachary Leader – if you have the stamina

Mason and Dixon by Thomas Pynchon, Cape, £16.99

According to the Thomas Pynchon Web site, Pynchon's first four novels – *V* (1963), *The Crying of Lot 49* (1965), *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), and *Vineland* (1990) – fall into two categories: Difficult, and Very Difficult. *Mason and Dixon*, which has a US print-run of 200,000 copies, falls into both. Though its 773 pages are jammed with arcane incident, the main lines of the plot, drawn from history, are comparatively simple. In the first third of the novel, the astronomer Charles Mason (1728-1786) and the surveyor Jeremiah Dixon (1733-1779) are commissioned by the Royal Society to observe a rare astronomical phenomenon, the Transit of Venus. The date is 1761, the setting the Cape of Good Hope, later the island of St Helena. In these latitudes, the protagonists encounter slavery, ketchup, dope, and a museum containing Jenkins' Ear, described by Pynchon as "erect," "vibrating," and "flirtatious."

Two years later, a second commission takes Mason and Dixon to America to produce the famous Line, a 244-mile boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland that eventually divided South from North, Slave from Free. This second section of the novel is by far its longest, and almost wholly without narrative tension. Mason and Dixon survey a stretch of border, bicker, meet a robot duck, a French chef, a Chinese Feng Shui master (in flight from the Jesuits), a giant Eel, a giant Golem, a giant Worm (like the giant Aeneas in *Gravity's Rainbow*), or the giant, lab-stomping Saurian in *Vineland* – and so on.

Four years into the expedition, Indian opposition halts the Line 36 miles short of its intended terminus. So back the party goes to Philadelphia, a no-less laid-back progress that involves yet more symbolic encounters, such as those with Stig the Swedish irredentist or Zephro Beck the "Were-beaver," a victim of kastoranthropy.

The novel ends with a brief, redemptive coda or "Last Transit". Mason and Dixon return to England and re-establish ties with parents and children. Before Dixon dies he and Mason express a new and affecting tenderness. "sit for a while in what might be an Embrace". Though they have spent their lives "in the service of a Flag whose Colors we never saw", feeding through their skill a rapacious and amoral system based on division, distinction, demarcation, they are to be pitied, even admired. The mellow good-heartedness of *Vineland* – too soft for fastidious postmodernists – lives on, for all the rigour and ingenuity of the

attack on reason, authority, commerce.

This attack draws deeply on Pynchon's fascination with science and technology, which allies *Mason and Dixon* with *V* and *Gravity's Rainbow*. In place of quantum mechanics and rocket science, we get astronomy and land surveying. There is much talk of precession, refraction, triangulation, parallaxes. The metaphoric properties of astronomy, cartography and topography are artfully interwoven, as are associated historical figures. Several extended jokes depend on dizzying horological conundrums, as when two clocks converse or a watch bites a thief's finger.

Then there's the massed research. Pynchon is reputed to have taken a quarter-century to write this book much of it, it is now clear, spent hunched over other books. Inkhorn terms abound: ort, ovine, annulus, trebuchet, macaronical, riparian. The most fantastical details are rooted in fact:

'There are no real villains in the novel, only dupes and pawns'

Jenkins's flirtatious Ear appears because Pynchon knows Robert Jenkins was appointed Governor of St Helena in 1741. The robot duck who first attacks and then falls for Armand Allegre, the French chef (victimised by the fame of his duck dishes, "those old canards"), is also historical, the creation of Jacques de Vaucanson (1709-1782), a

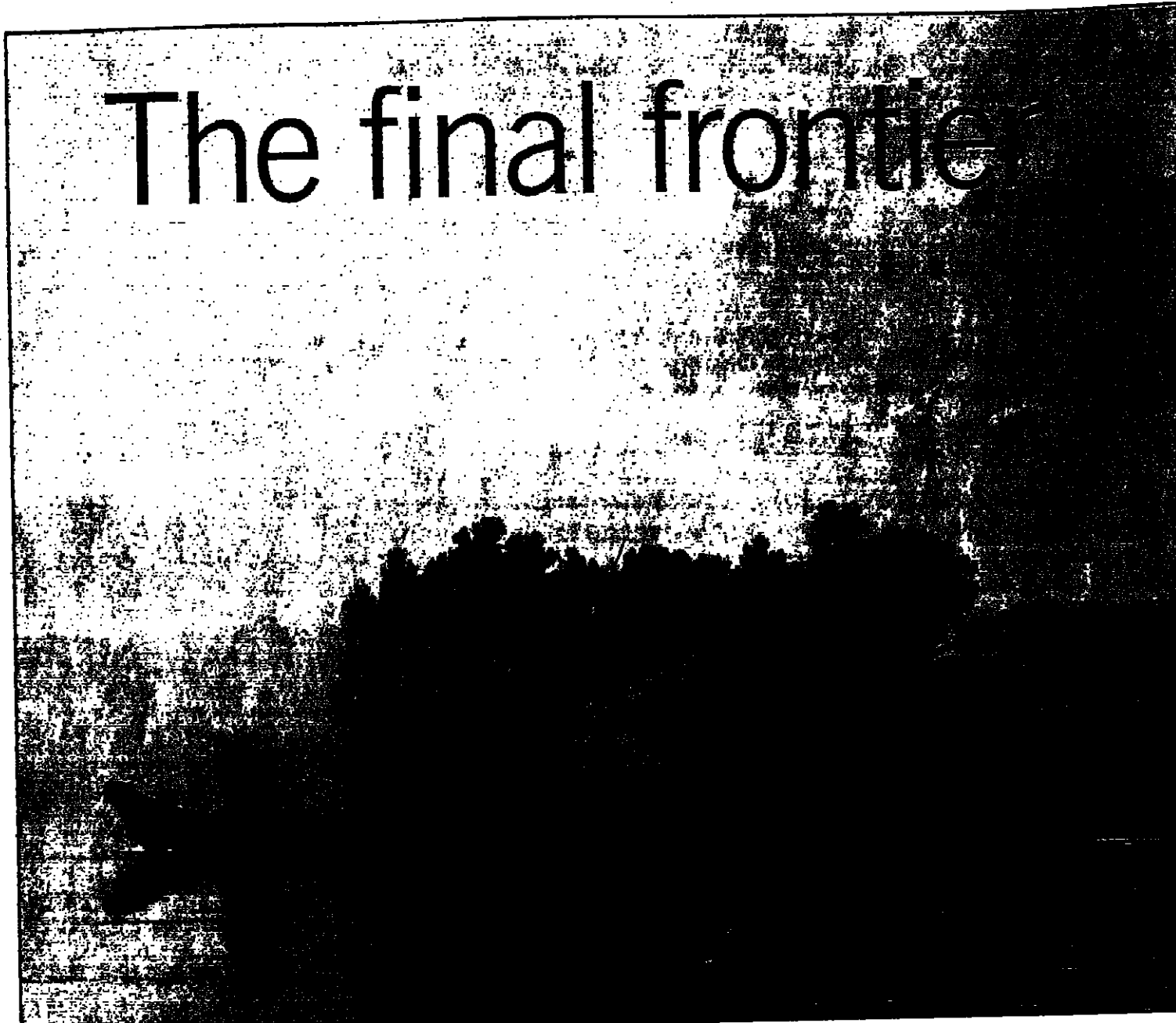
scientist hailed by Voltaire as a modern Prometheus (a title Mary Shelley borrowed for *Frankenstein*).

As for the Feng Shui master and his Jesuit pursuers, they too derive from history. It was the Jesuits who introduced China to Western astronomy, cartography, clockwork and other exotica. Feng Shui, which means harmony between man and nature, was the ideology of their antimodernising enemies. So it makes sense for Captain Zhang, the Feng Shui master, not only to describe the Mason-Dixon Line as "a Conduit for what we call Sha, or, as they say in Spanish California, Bad Energy," but to be pursued by Father Zarpazo, the Wolf of Jesus, who wants him returned to captivity in a Jesuit monastery in Quebec.

The Line, and the system that spawned it, violates nature as well as man. "Everywhere else on earth," explains Captain Zhang, "Boundaries fol-

The 'half-civilised, half-savage' life of the frontiersman captured by George Caleb Bingham in 'Fur Traders Descending the Missouri' 1845, in Edward Lucie-Smith's 'American Realism' (Thames & Hudson)

PHOTO: METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF



low Nature – coast-lines, ridgetops, river-banks – so honoring the Dragon or Shan within, from which Land-Scape ever takes its form. To mark a right Line upon the Earth is to inflict upon the Dragon's very Flesh, a sword-slash, a long, perfect scar." This helps explain the dragon-like creatures (giant Eel, giant worm) haunting the story and threatening the characters' sanity.

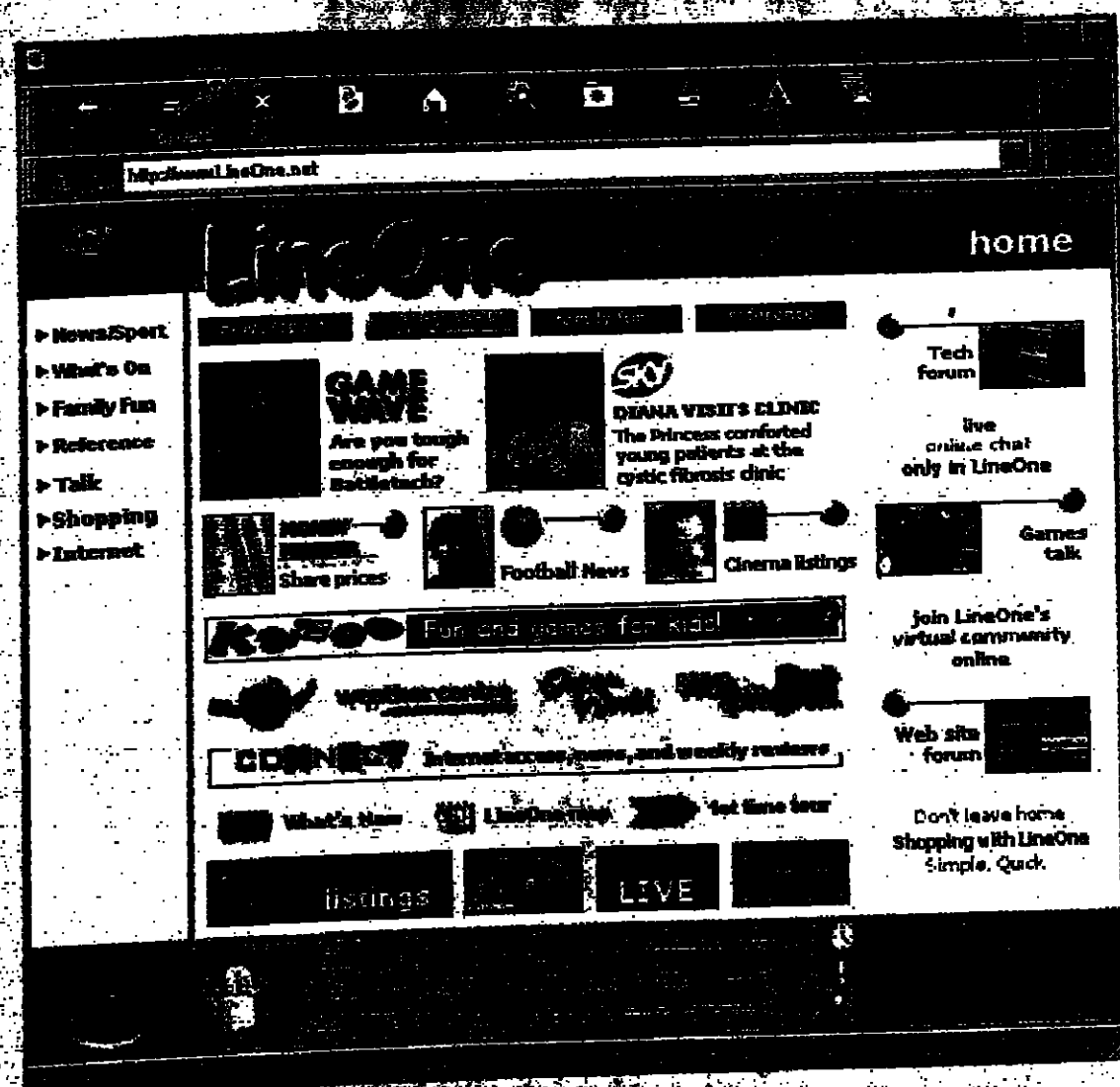
Dixon describes his fear of open spaces ("Run affliction for a Surveyor," comments Mason), in terms that recall these creatures, "as an incentive, to enclose that which had hitherto been without form, and hence haunted by anything and everything". Before meeting Mason, Dixon has enclosed the fields of Co Durham (driving small farmers and labourers off the land), a process whose social costs in the name of modernisation and reason are clear.

Yet Dixon is brave as well as fearful, and he hates slavery. In one of the best scenes, Mason prevaricates as Dixon rounds on a Virginia slaver and threatens to kill him. "No! Please," the slaver wails. "My little ones! O Tiffany! Jason!" The jokey deflation is characteristic, marking even the slaver as a hapless cog. There are no real villains in the novel, only dupes and pawns. Oppression flows from shadowy, impersonal agencies: the Royal Society, the East India Company, the Masons, the Jesuits, the Castle, the Desk. Nor is God much of a presence. Though Mason, a Deist, thinks of his astronomical measurements as "steps of an ungraspable approach to God, a growing clarity," he's as much in the dark by the novel's end as Dixon.

The story is narrated after the fact, in 1786, by the American expedition's chaplain, the Rev Wicks Cherrycoke (other good made-up names include Lud Oafery, Don Foppo de Pin-Heado and the frigate HMS Unreflective) and its idiom is 18th-century pastiche. There is much flourishing of capitals and contractions, as well as antique spelling, but also dozens of comic anachronisms ("multiplex," "Proclamation-Shmocklamation").

Anachronism, or seeming anachronism, figures also in more extended jokes, as when the real-life 18th-century Jesuit astronomer Father Lemaire cooks pizza, or a Chinese astronomer in the reign of one of the Hia Emperors goes hang-gliding, or George Washington's black-Jewish slave Gershon does stand-up. That many of these moments are not only funny but thematically relevant, like the "comic relief" in Shakespeare, is typical of the novel's exhausting brilliance. Readers with stamina will be amply rewarded.

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High season at Eden-on-sea

A paradise of fruit and fish awaits you in the Cook Islands. And there's this guy called Bruce... By Malcolm Senior

Fat, freckled and full of taste, the Cook Island banana is beyond compare. Alas, due to market economics the only place to eat it is in the islands themselves.

Travelling halfway around the world for a piece of fruit may be an eccentric reason to visit Rarotonga - but there are others. The Cook Islands stretch over a huge expanse of Pacific Ocean, south of the equator and east of the International Dateline. In spite of this apparent remoteness, the Cook Islands are the most accessible part of Polynesia. A direct flight with a brief stopover in Los Angeles is all that separates Britain from the laid-back life of Rarotonga.

And the islands need you right now; after all, they are technically bankrupt. Not that you'd notice. For, as one local told me, all you need to live simply is here.

You want fish? You wade into the lagoon that surrounds the island. You want fruit? Well, take your pick. Paw-paw - you bang that tree. Mango - it's the next one along. Thirsty? Then it's the coconut routine, for the best liquid that nature can offer. And then there are the bananas.

So why are the Eden-like Cook Islands bankrupt? The reason can be put down to a fiasco of a joint business deal involving the government and an Italian group to build a huge Sheraton resort hotel on the southern part of Rarotonga. All was going well until a few years ago, when investigations into corruption began in Milan and the rest of Italy; then the promised millions to build this example of Euro-Polynesian co-operation suddenly dried up. Now the only inhabitants of the half-built complex are packs of dogs that amble about from one shaded palm to another.

Just up the road from the Sheraton, a new place to stay has been set up. Bruce Young and his Cook Island aristocrat of a wife, Nga, have four chalets available for hire, operating under the name of

Daydreamer. The spotless, spacious rooms with air-conditioning would be reasons enough to recommend staying there, but Daydreamer's strongest feature is Bruce himself. Perpetually clad in vest and shorts, he is the very definition of the avuncular host.

From the moment that he meets you at the airport, where you are bundled into a sweet-smelling lei, or floral necklace, to the time of your departure, Bruce will keep you occupied. There is the grand tour of the island, done in a battered Ford estate, where the island's history is mixed with a spot of cricket-watching, a trip to the hardware store and an exclusive visit to a mate's garage, before ending up at the game fisherman's boat, where Bruce will gleefully admit never to going fishing

coral in a shallow lagoon. Less than a minute of wading will get you to beautiful coral gardens, full of mostly affable, multicoloured fish. Best of all, if you get tired there is no swim back to the shore - instead, you simply plant your feet on the sandy bottom and have a rest, contemplating the clear skies around you and the beach a few yards away.

Mind you, there is one thing to warn you of as you muse on your good fortune. Rarotonga lagoon has the most fearless parrotfish I've encountered. These brightly coloured chaps are no more than a few inches long, but are fiercely territorial. At the earliest opportunity one will come charging out from a coral crevice, with nothing but marine evil in its small mind. My attempts to scare one away, by

restaurant in the near distance, visitors become alarmed as the bus turns down what looks like little more than a dusty track. The concern grows as the driver appears hell-bent on taking his bus and passengers to a watery grave as the ocean looms. A sharp left reveals rugby posts on a playing field right next to the Pacific Ocean and the bus bumps to the far corner, before emptying its bewildered customers to the back door of the restaurant. "I'll be back at 10.15," shouts the driver as the diners disappear into the dark.

The Flame Tree is run by Sue Carruthers, a Kenyan, who named her superb restaurant after the trees that bloom scarlet at the height of the southern hemisphere summer. The food is a South Pacific melting-pot of some European cuisine mixed with South-east Asian styles and made with local fruit and vegetables. The restaurant is airy, and its dining area is surrounded by small pools, and linked with specially made footbridges.

Speedy diners, waiting for the return bus and arriving early to the corner of a far-flung field that will be forever a bus queue, have the prospect of a sumptuous night sky to gaze at. Vast numbers of bright stars seemingly at fingertip proximity, swished around with what looks like wispy cotton wool.

There are things to do, if this prospect is not enough to keep you occupied. The sharp, tooth-shaped ridges of rocky hills that from the centre of the island allow for one trans-island path, and a hard, sweaty slog over the narrow pass between two of the island's larger hills. Again, the round-the-island bus will pick you up from either end. But much the most pleasant form of exercise is to borrow Bruce's rusting mountain bike and pedal around the island, working up just enough of a sweat to warrant yet another dip in the warm waters of the lagoon before flopping down on to a towel on the empty beach. Now, where's my bag of bananas?

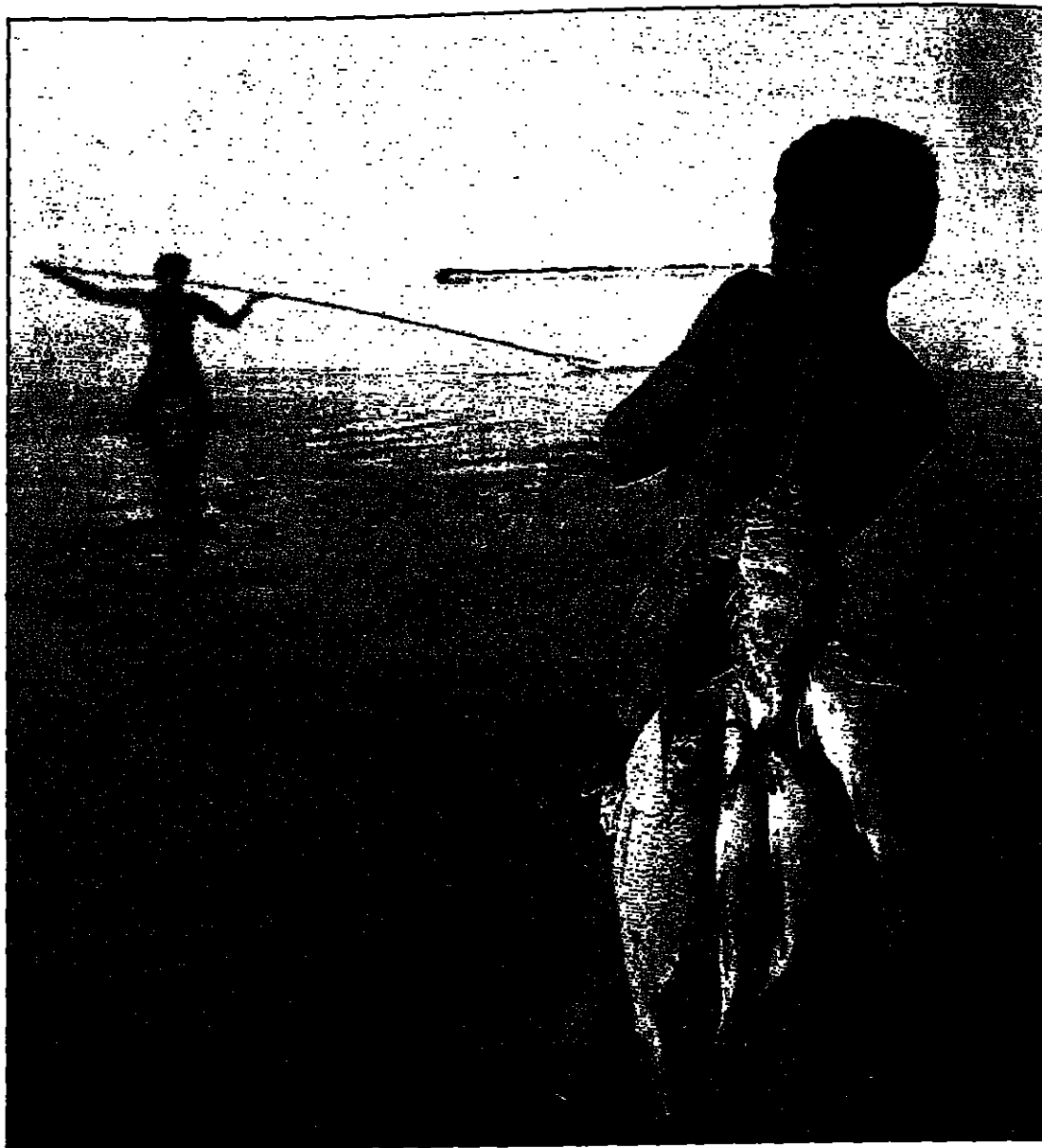


himself because he gets seasick. The only charge made is the payment of the tab at each of the many spots that will serve a beer. As for the evening, there is always the chance of one of Bruce's many barbecues, where the guest's role is to provide some food and more beer, and then eat as much as possible.

Across the circular road which is Rarotonga's M25, and just up from Bruce's Daydreamer, is some of the best snorkelling on an island that is abundant with accessible

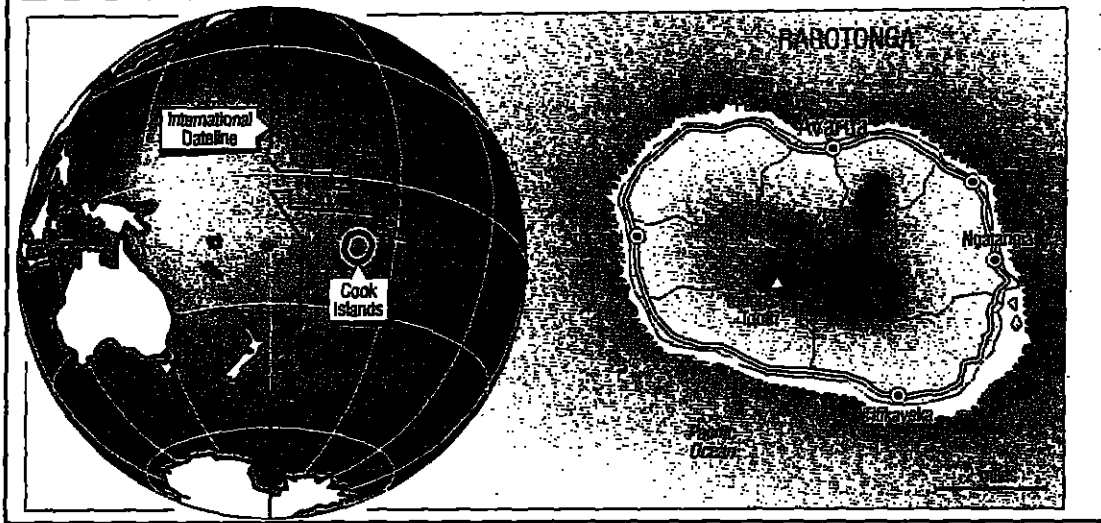
forlornly beating my snorkel at it as it puffed out its fishy chest, were met with contempt.

If all this feverish activity has given you a hunger that cannot be satisfied even by the Cook Island banana, then rejoice. Rarotonga is blessed with at least three excellent restaurants, the best of which is the Flame Tree. A journey to it is not easily forgotten, either. Most diners take the round-the-island bus, which ferries everyone around throughout the day for a few dollars. Having caught sight of the



Want fish? You simply wade into the lagoon that surrounds the island

PHOTO: N. DEVORE/TSW



Getting there

Air New Zealand (0181-741 2299) has a connection to Rarotonga each Friday from London Heathrow via Los Angeles. The journey time is just short of 24 hours. The lowest official fare for travel in May or June is £794 including UK tax, but the discount agency Flightbookers (0171-757 2444) quotes £752. A round-the-world itinerary, including a stop at Rarotonga, is available for only a little more. Malcolm Senior paid £845 to Austravel (0171-734 7755) for a London-Auckland ticket, travelling out on Air New Zealand via Rarotonga and returning on Britannia.

Sleeping and eating

Malcolm Senior paid 77 Cook Island dollars (equivalent to New Zealand dollars, £33) per night to stay at the Daydreamer. You can book direct on 00 682 25965. Austravel's new South Pacific brochure includes details of more expensive hotels, such as the Rarotongan Resort, costing £80 per room per night.

More information

South Pacific Handbook by David Stanley (Moon, £14.95); Rarotonga and the Cook Islands by Nancy Keller and Tony Wheeler (Lonely Planet, £6.95).

When I was a security guard frisking passengers at Gatwick airport, *The Independent* had not been born. If it had, perhaps I would have discovered mung beans, screwdrivers or empty wine box liners among readers' cabin baggage. After my request for your travel essentials

(besides passport, ticket and cash) these exotic items were among readers' responses. The story so far: every traveller, whether to Torquay or Tegucigalpa, faces the same challenge: to carry possessions stylishly, comfortably and securely. In recent years my valuables have been removed by

villains in Barcelona, Cartagena, New Orleans and Havana (the latter two in the same week), and frankly I was getting fed up. So *The Independent* teamed up with the youth and student travel specialist STA Travel to present a challenge to some of Britain's brightest young designers, and the Central St

Martin's School of Art. The winning design was the "amazing armband" devised by Rachel Atkinson, which conceals valuables close to your skin. Money can't buy this summer's top travel fashion accessory - but 10 were specially made up for readers who came up with the most original travel essentials. Judging the entries took longer than the average count in most constituencies, but after several recounts these winners emerged:

Fabian Acker, London SE22: "A screwdriver to (a) force open sealed windows in air-conditioned hotel rooms, (b) disconnect loudspeakers from lifts, lavatories and corridors."

Alison Rutter, York: "A 150ml bottle of Ariel Travel Wash."



Simon Calder

It's good for washing socks and pants so I can reduce the number I pack, and it has the bonus that the lid makes a watertight sink plug in most basins for soaking, and for saving water. PS: I don't work for Procter & Gamble!"

Matthew Cole, Manchester: "A pack of cards. They help

Competition winners: from mung beans to Blackpool rock - the essential travel items

while away delays at airports and stations, and, in extremis, you can try to increase your cash reserves with a game of poker."

Mrs I White, SRN, London SE3: "A pack of three condoms, just in case. Being a family planning nurse, I spread the word - not disease. It can be open to misinterpretation, but better that risk than any other!"

John Prosser, Blackpool: "Blackpool rock. People in many parts of the world have never seen (or tasted) anything like it. Puts the town on the map, too."

Tilly Willis, of Taunton: "When travelling in regions where fresh vegetables are not always readily available, eg the desert or the former Soviet Union in winter, I take a small bag of dry mung beans. By adding a little water to a handful of beans in a sealable jar, you'll have, within a few hours, once the beans have softened, a crisp, nutritious snack, packed with vitamins. Convenient, highly portable and no cooking required." [Ms Willis kindly supplied a snack's worth of beans - very nice, too.]

Alexandra Harley, London SE22: "I find a musical

instrument essential. Violins and recorders are most appropriate. Both of these I play particularly badly; when busking I can raise a great deal of money very quickly in order that I move on."

Michael Stace, Tonbridge: "Gaffer tape can do anything, from mending holes in luggage to administering Apollo XIII-type repairs to broken-down vehicles."

Roger Sawtell, Northampton: "South of Suez, water is seldom plentiful. A used wine box inner makes a useful water store with tap. Costs nothing, packs flat. Weighs about 50g, much lighter than the traditional wine-skin made from a dead goat."

Last, and most concise, is from **Fiona Sanson, of Edinburgh:** "Take a travel iron - smooths cottons, flattens muggers."

Thanks to all who took part.

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Island hopping in steps

It's all action in Greece: Michael Williams sets out on foot, while, opposite, Louise Jury succumbs to the lure of the sea

Let's be blunt about touring the Greek islands. If you didn't have to get around by boat (with your head full of adman's copy about timeless places, the wine-dark sea, tavernas and fishing boats), you would not willingly visit the ragbag of concrete villages that comprise the island ports.

Admittedly, people have been known to cry at the first sight of Syri at nightfall, with the lights in the windows of the tiers of Neo-Classical villas staggered around an almost perfect marine amphitheatre. And then there's the entrance to Rhodes harbour through the imaginary feet of the Colossus, or the smack-in-the-face sheer cliffs of Santorini's volcano. But most island ports are drab affairs full of dust, rucksacks and the smell of overcooked souvlaki. The answer is to walk away. Literally.

A walking tour of the Greek islands may sound like the equivalent of a boating holiday in the Himalayas, but it is not as absurd as it sounds. Regard the islands for what they are – a paleolithic mountain formation, where the sea has filled the valleys – and with judicious use of feet and ferries you can see the real Greece that is puffed in the brochures, but almost invariably disappears when you disembark.

The perfect case is Folegandros, a spiny 15km island in the southern Cyclades. After 10 gut-wrenching hours on a pensioned-off cross-Channel hulk, you pull in at the little port of Livanassi, with a concrete pension, a couple of shuttered tavernas and a shingly beach



Walk away from the port at Folegandros and you find yourself in a quiet, timeless world

PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL WILLIAMS

lined with limp palm trees and covered with what look suspiciously like sea urchins. You would probably stay on the boat were it not for that glimpse of a whitewashed village spread like icing sugar on the distant cliff-top.

Like many Aegean islands ravaged by centuries of pirate raids or Turkish invasions, Folegandros has preserved her treasures in the interior. An hour's trek along a dried-up stream bed takes you to Chora, the capital, with gleaming houses spread out like a snow bank in a fold of the hilltop. Every stereotype of the perfect Greek island village is here: cats snoozing among geranium pots, old men in the *kafeneion* under the plane tree, black widows scurrying from the bakers with sticks of bread.

Tempting though it was to stay – easy enough, when I visited, as the only bus had been dispatched to Athens for repair – this is the place to start some serious walking. (Well, not that serious:

the rules for Greek island treks are a swim at the end of every day and a bed of sorts every night. Both are easy to achieve.)

Striding across the humpback of Folegandros is like being in a low-flying aircraft, with the eye-scorching glimmer of the Aegean on both sides and the wind beating like a slipstream round your ears. It is also like travelling back in time. In the hum of a hot afternoon, following a mule train of what looked like moving haystacks, I met Nikitas Marinakis, one of the last barley croppers of the Cyclades, following a trade that Odysseus would have recognised.

Including a night's stay in a taverna on the coast, and another up by the windmills in the hilltop village of Ano Meria, you can get to the northern tip of the island in three easy days. This, for me, included swimming from a sandy beach inhabited only by a naked, Pan-like figure who lived under a

cypress tree. The locals said he was a bit touched; I thought, probably touched by good fortune.

From here you can see Sikinos, your next mountain, rising out of the sea. You have to hike back to the Folegandros port to get the ferry, but this can be done in a day along the main road, and the ferry is only half-an-hour's ride.

You can walk across Sikinos in two days, and tempting though it is to stay (this is one of the most unspoilt islands, having had a ferry landing stage for only a couple of years), you should round off the trip with one of the best walking islands in Greece.

Though the mountains of Amorgos can be seen across the horizon, it has no direct link with Sikinos, and a night must be spent in Naxos changing ferries. But it is worth the trouble: the hike along the ridge from the port of Katapola in the west to Egiali in the east is among the best in the islands, and from here you

can plonk yourself into a ferry berth back to Piraeus to recover.

Even easy hiking like this should take account of certain safeguards: go preferably in spring or autumn, and even then seek out a handy olive tree at midday; always carry at least a litre of water; wear a hat and cotton trousers rather than shorts; and never assume that the bark of a Greek country dog is worse than its bite.

Though one suspects that most island Greeks would be happier if their islands were ploughed up for A-roads so that they could exercise their Mitsubishi and motorbikes at full tilt, there is still an atavistic respect for walkers. After the statutory inquiry about how many children you have, the next is always: "How did you get here?" Even if you cannot report that you have any sons, the answer, "Me ta podia" – on foot – will always be a response that delights.

Greecing the wheels

Taking off

Most scheduled flights between the UK and Greece operate between London (Heathrow or Gatwick) and Athens on British Airways (0345 222111), Olympic Airways (0171-409 3400) and Virgin Atlantic (01293 74777). In early summer, British Airways has a World Office £161 plus a massive £18.90 tax – Greece charges more departure tax than any other EU country. For this price, you must book by 14 May, and at least two weeks in advance of travel.

Thessaloniki, served daily on BA via Stuttgart, and direct four times a week on Olympic, costs £181.90 including tax.

For travel from places outside London, and/or to reach destinations in the islands and elsewhere in Greece, the only prospect for a non-stop flight is a charter. For example, Unifert (0990 114114) has flights to Corfu in June from Gatwick, Stansted, Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle for between £145 and £199, no tax.

Ferry 'cross the Aegean
Out of season (October to June) there are at least three boats a week from Piraeus to Folegandros and Sikinos. The least bad is the Milos Express (in a previous incarnation the Sixties Blue Sealink ferry Vortingen). Careful study of timetables should also give three connections a week between Sikinos and Amorgos, via Naxos.

Your constant companion should be the estimable *Greek Island Hopping 1997* by Frewin Poffley (Thomas Cook, £12.95). Not only is this a comprehensive survey of Greek ferry services, it is also a joy to read. A warning from the chapter "Planning an Itinerary", for example: "Build a two-week itinerary along the lines of: 'on Tuesday we'll arrive at the port at 14.20, giving us a free 20 minutes to sup a pint of ouzo before catching the 14.45 boat', and the chances are you will come unstuck sooner rather than later. You would also end up extremely drunk. Greece is a casual country, so 'on the Tuesday afternoon or evening we'll catch a ferry' approach will be far more successful."

Casting off

Seven days sailing at Portofeli with half-board costs from £332 low season to £610 per person. Details from Thomas Cook on 0990 666222.

Finding out

National Tourism Organisation of Greece, 4 Conduit Street, London W1R 0DJ (0171-734 5997). Nearest Tube: Oxford Circus. Open 9.30am-5pm from Monday to Thursday, 9.30am-4.30pm Fridays.

A good source for books on Greece is Hellenic Bookservice, 91 Fortess Road, London NW5 1AG (0171-267 9499; fax 0171-267 9498).

Thessaloniki is European Capital of Culture for 1997. Information on events is available from the Organisation for the Cultural Capital of Europe at 105 Vasilissis Olgas Avenue, Thessaloniki (00 30 31 86 78 60).

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The Aegean on an even keel

Where to learn to sail in perfect conditions? The Peloponnese, says Louise Jury

The first day out on the water, the breeze died and sailing class adjourned to theory on land. On the second, gusting force four winds capsize even the experts.

As a novice dinghy sailor, it was gratifying to watch the big boys falling in. It was also terrifying. Swerving in and out of the waves, with water skidding the surface of the dinghy in sheets, there seemed every chance of plunging beneath at any moment. The wind was God. It was nerve-tingly invigorating.

Despite growing up only a mile from the sea, I had never sailed before. In my mind's eye, sailing was a cross between an Arthur Ransome adventure of jolly little boats on English lakes, and sophisticated, chianti-fuelled trips in the Mediterranean.

Then a friend who had spent her childhood messing around on rivers found a holiday firm that undertook to remind her how to do it all over again, and to teach me from scratch. My opportunity had arrived. I had only hazy notions of what I was letting myself in for. But one week after walking into the travel agent's, we were on a plane to Greece.

A two-hour coach transfer from Athens took us across the Corinth canal, through winding mountain roads to the Peloponnese town of Portofeli, where the public boat-navigating arts of tacking and gybing were to be imparted.

Starting with the basics, we learnt how to rig Toppers and Wayfarers, progressing to Lasers and faster, trickier boats with alarming-looking harnesses for the more ambitious. With varying degrees of skill and enthusiasm, we caught the wind and spun to and fro in the large bay where –

for strange reasons of the junction of tidal patterns – there is virtually no tide to worry about. This is particularly useful for beginners.

For lunch, there would be either a buffet meal in our hotel, or sandwiches and beer from the beach bar, as the dinghies bobbed in rows along the shore. At the end of another afternoon on the water, the half-board arrangement meant dinner was sometimes at the hotel, sometimes in a local restaurant.

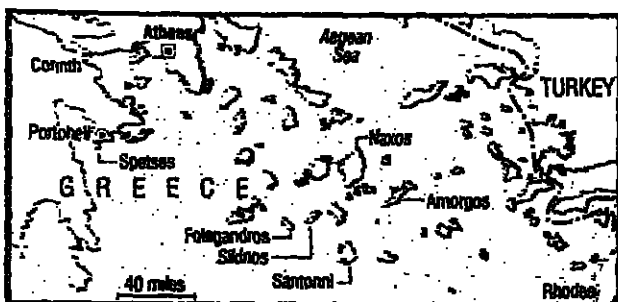
Many guests ate together, and the spirit of sporting bonhomie was infectious – and in some ways difficult to escape (though if you were not a gang sort of person you would not feel obliged to join

devious means of putting your rivals off while speeding ahead yourself. For the dinghy equivalent of boy racers, vying for the number one position was all.

We travelled in October, at the end of the season, so not every day was sunny, though it was never cold. A disadvantage was more erratic winds than during the summer. One cloudy day we embarked on a day sail out of the bay into the open sea to find ourselves becalmed. Only the motor launch which accompanied the flotilla for safety reasons saved us from a dull day bobbing helplessly on the water. Travelling out of season did have the advantage of cutting numbers. Tuition was personal, and there was never a shortage of equipment. If a break was desired, the alternative of wind-surfing – with tuition – was always on hand.

The lure of the water was such that all dreams of exploring the Peloponnese, home of some of Greece's richest ancient treasures, vanished. Epidaurus, where the ancient Greek theatre is still in use – notably last year, when Peter Hall directed Britain's own National Theatre company in Sophocles' Oedipus plays – or Mistras, a medieval town with a large castle, will have to await a return trip.

Using the Flying Dolphin, a giant, bug-like hydrofoil that once belonged to the Russian army and now dwells Portofeli harbour, it is possible to visit nearby islands. An alternative is to share a water taxi for a visit to Spetses, as we did. The bright lights and bars smack of all the best and worst of a night out in Greece, but wander the back streets, or the coast where John Fowles set *The Magus*, and quieter restaurants can be found. We ate at a table on the shingle with the waves lapping gently just feet away. And in the morning, we were back on the water.



in). Some made their own explorations of what Portofeli had to offer: a snattering of small, friendly restaurants, with the far corner of the harbour being a favoured spot.

On the hottest days, the sun leapt off the waves like fragments of a shattered mirror as the boat flew with the wind. Warm rays on the face seemed to drain any memory of work hassles.

The more competitive sailors shed the tensions of life at home by engaging in one-upmanship on the water. "Luff him up," they yelled, a baffling cry to novices, and a technical procedure which I was never to negotiate but appeared to be a

Trouble spots on safari

Dos and don'ts for your safari – compiled by Paul Goldstein of Exodus for the latest 'Bridge the World' newsletter (free by calling 0171-911 0900).

Don't patronise the people of the bush – their civilisation is older than yours. Make a genuine effort to learn their customs. Do wear cotton and take a woolen sweater – man-made fibres are as unhealthy as man-eating lions in the tropics.

Don't wear sweaty trainers without socks, or you can expect them to receive a sacrificial burning.

Do beware the local brews – they win on price but lose the morning after.

Do take more than enough film and spare batteries. Game reserves are well stocked with animals but not Fuji Provia and lithium CR5M6Vs.

Don't know better than your guides. If they say that log is a crocodile, believe them.

something to declare

A likely story...from United Airlines

"The remarkable United 777. Designed by the employee-owners of United, it's flying into the 21st century. With a video monitor at every seat."

The Boeing Corporation might be a bit miffed to be

given no credit for creating its latest aircraft. United, as the launch customer for the Boeing 777, was involved during the development of the new plane. The airline's "owner-employees" (it has a similar structure to the John Lewis Partnership) suggested design improvements. But the

claim that they designed the plane, rather than Boeing's engineers, is a little far-fetched.

Passengers could be miffed, too, when they look for the "video monitor at every seat". United has been plagued with problems over in-flight entertainment on

board its 777s. While the earliest versions of the plane indeed have seat-back monitors, the most recent arrivals rely on the old pull-down movie screen. So if you are flying off from Heathrow to San Francisco this afternoon, don't forget your opera glasses.

Visitors' book Wood Norton Hall, Worcestershire

All round first-class accommodation and service – J Ormonde, Renfrewshire.

Ditto – P Palaaky, Haringey.

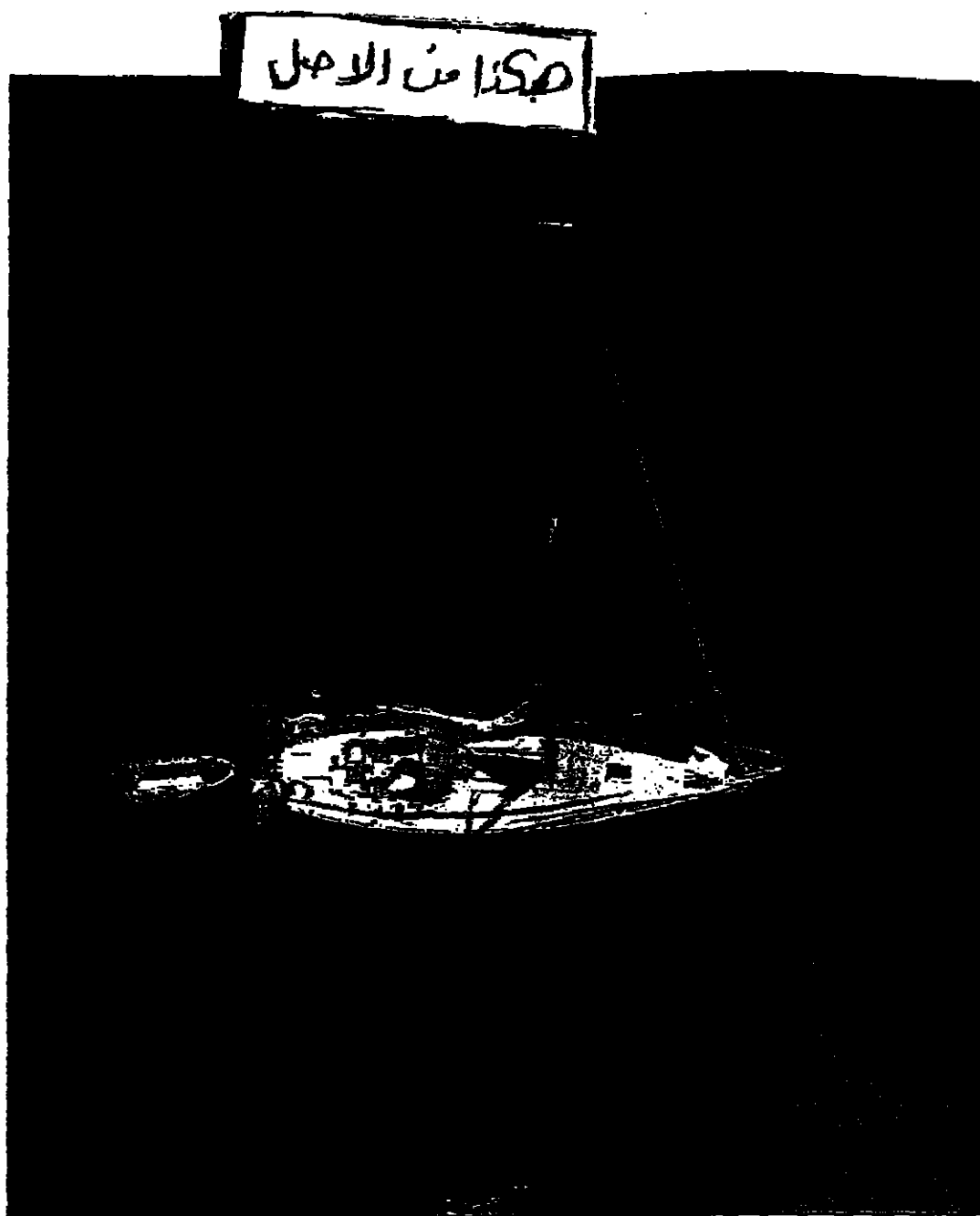
Superb location, even better food, and the service was the best of all – M Griffiths, London.

The pink-grapefruit pudding was one of the best I've ever tasted – Illegible, Borough Green.

Outrageous mini-bar prices. I'm BBC, I can't afford these prices – Anon.

Bargain of the week

A wrinkle in Alitalia's flight schedules means the Italian airline is offering an excellent deal from Heathrow to Naples. If you catch the airline's early-morning departure (at 6.55am) via Milan, you qualify for a fare of £149 return, plus £15 tax. That is £30 less than the lowest fare to Milan alone. A weekend surcharge of £5 each way applies, and the fare is available only until 30 May. You can book direct with Alitalia on 0171-602 7111, or through a travel agent.



In the clear: lack of tides around Portofeli makes this an ideal place for novice sailors

PHOTO: D FRAZIER/TSW

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The odd weekend with Auntie

Simon Calder finds the BBC's foray into upmarket tourism is on his wavelength

At 5pm the day after polling, Brian Ann and I emerged wearily from studio 4A to contemplate the next five years. We had been transmitting news of the Conservative triumph for 19 solid hours, pausing only for the *Today* programme and *The World at One*. Brian was the late and much-lamented Mr Redhead; Ann Sloman was editor of Radio 4's *Election '92* programme, now chief political adviser at the BBC; and I was the studio engineer.

What relevance, you may ask, does the last election have to a travel article? Because the opulent country house hotel at which I have just spent £70 a night is the place where the BBC trained me and thousands of other engineers. A night's stay at the Wood Norton Hall in Worcestershire cost me the best part of a licence fee – and a lot more than a week's wages when I joined the corporation. And it was worth every hard-earned penny.

To visualise the Beeb's place in the country, imagine a slightly down-at-heel teacher-training college planted in surroundings a few notches more salubrious than it deserves. The publicity for Wood Norton, saying it is located in 170 acres of rolling Worcestershire countryside, is economical with the truth. Standard-issue halls of residence straggle down the hillside in the direction of Evesham; teaching blocks, varying from sub-Nissen huts to superior redbrick, meander through woodland towards Wales. At the hub, holding this eccentric estate together while remaining firmly aloof, is the marvellously pretentious baronial pile of Wood Norton Hall.

The old road from the medieval market town of Evesham to the cathedral city of Worcester loops along the north bank of the Avon, through placid meadows framed by the sturdy Malvern hills. A 19th-century claimant to the throne of France, the Duc d'Aumale, shrewdly settled upon this location to establish a permanent home in England. (Indeed, the countryside does convincing impressions of Normandy.) He was the son of King Louis-Philippe, and set about embellishing a shooting lodge into an over-the-top ersatz chateau in a green and indisputably pleasant land. After he died in 1897, his great-nephew, the Duc d'Orléans, continued to create a home fit for a pretender to the French throne in central England. So, from the outside, the hall is an



An architectural hoot: Wood Norton Hall – shooting lodge turned chateau

PHOTOGRAPH: PHILIP MEECH

architectural hoot. References from stout Flemish to half-hearted half-timbers combine with Midlands redbrick to produce an absurd concoction. It is listed Grade II*, presumably for its comedy value. Inside, the unfulfilled heirs to the French throne set about avenging their dispossession by imposing the regal emblem, the fleur-de-lis, upon every surface – notably the heavy and dark oak panelling.

Thus adorned by a frenzy of regal rubber-stamping, the hall changed hands repeatedly. The Orléans family sold it in 1912, after which it passed through the hands of several local merchants and enjoyed a spell as a preparatory school.

In 1938, with the prospect of war, the BBC bought Wood Norton to fit out as an emergency broadcasting centre. A succession of engineers arrived and built half a dozen studios. The plan, to quote the

BBC, was to provide the nation "with music, talks and entertainment to keep up morale". During the war, Wood Norton's productivity almost matched the output of the corporation's present five national radio networks – 835 hours of broadcasting each week.

Once hostilities had ceased, the place was reconstituted the BBC's Engineering Training Centre. Thousands of trainees were dispatched on the train from Paddington to an ensemble that someone unfairly christened "Colditz-on-Avon".

The country house regular who is used to expensive croquet lawns, squash courts and a swimming-pool will get a surprise at Wood Norton. All those facilities are present, but they are accompanied by furrows of satellite dishes and a rank of huts that were put up as temporary accommodation, yet look as permanently rooted as the old hall. They are populated by brainy-looking

people possessing clipboards, earnest expressions and the occasional beard.

What strange circumstances have planted mere tourists like me among them? In the brave new world of British broadcasting, the old certainty that a few hundred engineers would have to be rolled out every year to feed the increasing corporate appetite no longer applied. The Engineering Training Centre, and its proprietor BBC Resources, urgently needed a Plan B.

Cut to the *chaise-longue*. I'm sitting in the bar of a country house hotel, where the virtues of moderation are cheerfully jettisoned in favour of unremitting indulgence. But this is the BBC's place in the country, and the corporation is playing to its strengths. A handsome monochrome photograph of Tony Hancock interrupts the march of the fleur-de-lis, and reminds you who is keeper of Britain's cultural cre-

dentials. Stars of stage, screen and soap beam down while you sip a pre-dinner drink and choose your meal.

No engineer who has become accustomed to the high-volume institutional catering of the Wood Norton canteen will believe the creations in the Duc restaurant. My choice? Gravadax with a celebratory remoulade (a phrase which sounds as if it could have escaped from an especially arcane circuit diagram), followed by monkish in soy and ginger sauce and a miraculous soufflé with its own sorbet – defying all the laws of physics I ever learnt. Over the years, many of the guest rooms have served as offices or laboratories, but a massive makeover has turned each into a shrine to the BBC's artistic aristocracy. I opened the door to my bathroom and there was Victoria Wood. Photographs of the comedienne grinned from the (inevitable) fleur-de-lis wallpaper, perhaps amused by my astonishment at the range of toiletries. As a trainee, you were lucky to get a slab of carbolic. But changing role from employee to customer entitles you to a basket heaving with all manner of sweet-smelling potions.

Wood Norton has a ghost, of course, but nothing interrupted a sleep as long as the bed was wide. In the morning, after an industrial-sized breakfast, you can chase after other corporate legends. Meandering past television studios and the non-linear video editing suite, you locate an unprepossessing off-green building named the Bredon Wing. I learnt one end of a soldering iron from the other in one of its classrooms, and picked up dark rumours about a network of subterranean studios and of certain engineers sworn to secrecy. During the Cold War, it was said, Wood Norton was primed to fulfil the same role as it had in the Second World War. If a direct Soviet hit on Broadcasting House wiped out everything from the canteen to studio 4A, the plan was to continue broadcasting from a complex buried deep in the hillside.

I have no proof of this, because even after a good few pints in the Phoenix bar (that curious yellow-brick block that also houses the squash courts), those certain engineers remained taciturn. These days, Wood Norton occasionally speaks peace unto the nation, but only from the tiny news studio installed in a hall of residence.

Although you may never know what lies beneath the hill, the lands beyond it hold

Three of the Beeb: locations on the tourist trail

Wood Norton Hall, Evesham (01586 420007); £70 per person per night. BBC Visitor Centre, Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London W1 – due to open in October as part of the BBC's 75th birthday celebrations, and promising the chance to present a weather forecast and direct an episode of *EastEnders*. BBC World, Aldwych, London WC2. The World Service shop, at Bush House at the eastern end of the Strand, sells everything from short-wave radios to cookery books.



no secrets. While the old government withered in London, in Worcestershire, burgeoning bluebells were tickled by the morning breeze, reflecting the misty blue morning haze above the Avon. A charter of bird-song mingled with chimes from the church tower down the road at Wyre Piddle (this sounds like a made-up name from a BBC sitcom but is in fact a jolly riverside village). Evesham, possessed of an ancient abbey and the highest density of *Balti* restaurants outside Birmingham, exerted an equal and opposite attraction. So I stayed put and revelled in the fact that I had not a single lecture to attend.

Say what you like about its programmes, the BBC has tackled its first venture into upmarket tourism with aplomb. The last time the Tories won an election, I disappeared to wander through the remnants of the USSR, from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Next time, I'll just go to Worcestershire and relax in the bath with Victoria Wood.

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سكدا من الاصل

With little rain forecast for the next few weeks, Anna Pavord offers a guide to keeping plants happy in dry weather

Like a cow just coming into milk, the sky has at last squeezed out the first drops of rain. Well, I thought to myself, at least the system still works. For gardeners, the lack of rain has been an inconvenience, but it is not a disaster, as it is for farmers who have fields full of lambs and no grass to put in front of them.

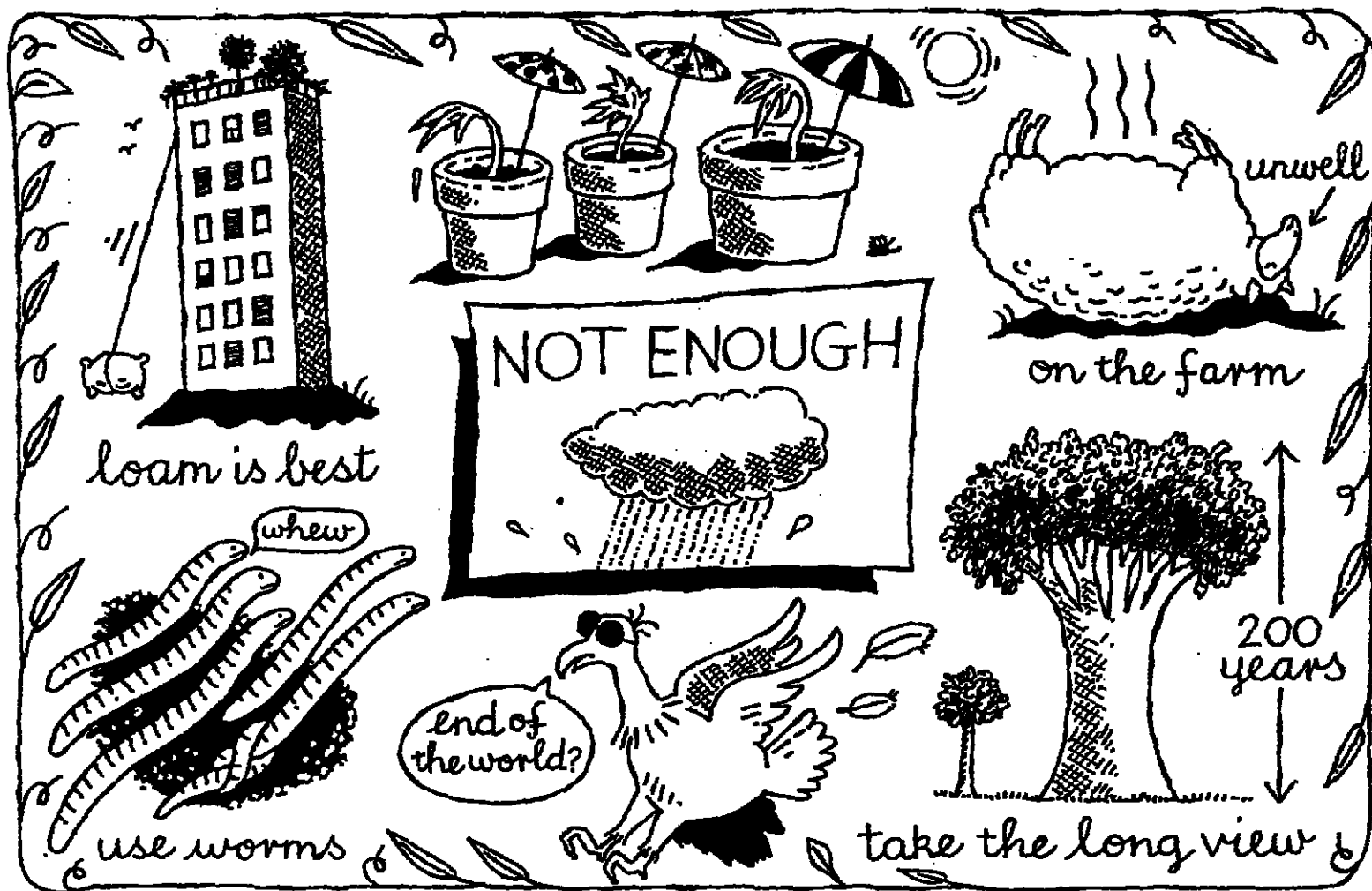
When water was a public utility I felt I ought to do something to help in a drought: put a brick in my loo, cut down the number of showers I took, rig up some system to save rainwater, even siphon off the bath water to reuse on the flower borders. Privatisation has changed all that. While those who run the water companies pay themselves so handsomely for wasting a billion gallons of water a year in leaks, I feel less of an urge to help them with their problems.

At least the Conservatives saved themselves the embarrassment of a Minister for Drought. The last one, Denis Howell, was put in place by the Labour government after the exceptional drought of the summer of 1976. Within days of his taking office, it rained floods.

That summer environmentalists were predicting the end of the world as we knew it. Because of that drought, we lost a big beech tree in the garden. I still miss it, but it was old, and the following autumn we planted another three to take its place. In the long term, the rest of the garden was unaffected by the lack of rain.

If gardening teaches you anything, it is the importance of the long view rather than the short. We have to hang on to that thought. Style merchants treat flowers like scatter-cushions to be strewn here and there where the colours will make a good photo-opportunity for the next snapper who happens to be passing through. If the flowers die, as they tend to when their owner's requirements are put before their own, no matter: there are more to be had at the garden centre. Garden centres market plants like cans of beans.

The long view on drought is that, compared with Somalia, we don't know what it means. That said, there are plenty of things real gardeners can do to help their plants through the next prolonged spell of dry weather. The crux of the matter is the soil. If you get the soil right, the plants will look after themselves. Plants in pots, hanging baskets, growing bags or other unnatural places will always need more water



The watertight solution

than plants in open ground. Pots in sun dry out more quickly than pots in shade.

On thin, fast-draining ground, the more bulky stuff you can get into the ground, the better it will be able to hang on to what moisture there is. Think of compost, muck and leaf mould as blotting-paper. Soil needs organic matter like this. Nature keeps trying to provide it, but we, as gardeners, keep clearing it away. The easy way to get blotting-paper back into the soil is to lay on thick blankets of mulch through the autumn and winter, when the soil is already damp, and then

their container-grown plants, the general time for planting trees and shrubs was the autumn. It is still the best time. Most trees and shrubs are dormant then, although roots continue growing until the turn of the year, when the soil temperature drops.

With no top hamper to worry about, plants can concentrate on getting their roots sorted out, getting the browsing and sluicing systems in place before spring, when everything happens at once. This April, leaves emerged earlier than usual, and newly planted trees and shrubs have been losing water by trans-

piration more quickly than they can pull it up from roots that have had no chance to make close contact with the surrounding soil. If you plant in autumn, you can get hold of bare-rooted trees and shrubs, dug from open ground, which will have far better root systems than anything grown in a pot. Well-developed roots, snuffling about in well-cared-for soil, will be a plant's best defence against drought.

Container-grown plants are generally raised in soilless compost. That's another problem. After their easy life in the open texture of a soilless compost, plants sometimes can't be bothered to attack the real stuff. They just wander about in the increasingly crowded and starved confines of the pot-shaped bit of compost you have planted, and fail to develop a system capable of keeping up with the rate of growth on top. But if they have never been used to the easy life, they won't miss it. Loam-based composts hang on to moisture (and nutrients) better than soilless ones. They are not as popular, because they are much heavier to hump about - and if you live three floors up in a building without a lift, that matters. If you don't, use loam-based compost for your containers. Water-retaining granules such as Swell-gel help, too. I now use them as a matter of routine when I am planting up pots for the summer.

In a survey carried out by *Gardening Which?*, readers said that the most common casualties of drought in their gardens were camellias, azaleas and rhododendrons, growing in containers. That is scarcely surprising. Those acid-loving shrubs have surprisingly compact rootballs. That isn't a problem if they are growing - as nature intended them to be - in a woodland setting. There, a mulch of thick leaf litter prevents moisture evaporating from the ground. Overhead trees provide shade and shelter so that the foliage of the lower-growing shrubs is not dried out by sun or wind. Perhaps we should be asking our-

selves whether we should risk the lives of such shrubs by growing them in containers, rather than complaining when they die.

The worst casualties of drought are usually vegetables. This is because, to be a success in our terms, to be fat and succulent, they need to grow with as little competition as possible from other plants. We have to keep them well weeded, which means there is an awful lot of bare soil round them. Bare soil dries out much more quickly than soil that is covered with the leaves of plants. That sounds paradoxical, when you think of the

amount of water plants take up from the soil. But it's true, as you would know if, during the dry weather, you were to slip your hand under a fat clump of ground-hugging pulmonaria and feel the cool, moist soil underneath.

When vegetables such as lettuce, peas and courgettes are well established, plant marigolds and nasturtiums to blanket the ground around them.

And ponder on the fact that there was scarcely a heart-beat between shock! horror! reports of the drought and complaints about rain stopping play on the cricket field.



CUTTINGS

ing to tulips. The festival runs until Monday, Fashley Manor and its gardens are open (11 am-5 pm) today, tomorrow and Monday. Admission £4.50.

The potter Jim Keeling is holding two sales in May - an excellent opportunity to increase your stock. I particularly like his wide, low pans for growing sempervivums and pinks. The Hertfordshire sale is at Benington Landship, Benington, near Stevenage and runs from next Friday to Sunday 11 May (9 am-5 pm). The Yorkshire sale is at Bramham Park, Wetherby, and also runs from next Friday to Sunday 11 May (9 am-5 pm).

The jolliest show I went to last May was the one at Courson, south of Paris, where Patrice and Helene Fustier preside over a stylish jamboree that is half plant sale, half garden party. This year's *Journées des Plantes de Courson* are 16-18 May and 17-19 October. For more details contact Domaine de Courson, 91680 Courson, Monteloup, France (0033 01 64 58 90 12).

Weekend work

Early May is an ideal time to plant bamboos. They make good screens, but will not thrive in very windy places. They like good, moist soil. *Arundinaria nuda* is the most shade-tolerant, with purple-flushed canes and narrow, bright green leaves. Soak them well before you plant them.

Plant out onion sets. Sow a short row of a leaf lettuce such as Salad Bowl and a row of peas, covering them with netting against mice. If the ground is very dry, soak the drill well before the seed goes in. Continue to sow annuals where you want them to flower, but not in a dust bowl. Soak the ground well before you scatter the seed, and keep the ground moist until it has germinated. I have been sowing *Calendula officinalis* var *Prolifera* (Chiltern, £1.05). It's called the hen and chickens marigold, because the central flower is surrounded by a ring of lesser flowers which spring from its base.

Mild, coastal areas of Britain may already have seen their last frost. In the coldest parts of central and northern Scotland, frosts may continue until June. At no other time of the year does location play such an important part in choosing the jobs that can safely be done. Never be in too much of a hurry to sow seed. Several trials have shown that later sowings often catch up on early ones without running the same risks.

A greenhouse can be used to shelter plants in spring. You can plant up pots and hanging baskets, so that growth is well advanced by the time you move them outside. You can bring on vegetables such as green peppers and tomatoes, which should not be set outside until late May.

Top up gravel chippings on beds and bowls of alpine. Replant sempervivums and saxifages tweaked out by birds, which they are too frequently for their comfort. Nip off the dead flowers of tulips and daffodils, but leave the stems and foliage to die down naturally.

If you haven't already done so, cut back almost the whole of the previous season's growth of late-flowering shrubs such as *caryopteris*. *Hardy fuchsias* can also be cut down to the ground. Some shrubs, such as *forsythia* and *elaagnus*, should have a third of their growth cut out, the cuts being made where a branch joins the main stem. Aim to renew the shrub entirely over three years.

DROUGHTBUSTERS

- 1 Add organic matter to the soil
- 2 Mulch
- 3 Plant trees and shrubs in autumn, not spring
- 4 Use loam-based compost
- 5 Use water-retaining granules in containers
- 6 Match plants to positions
- 7 Soak container-grown plants before planting
- 8 Buy a rainwater butt



let the worms drag it into the soil for you. Getting the soil into good condition is the single most important thing that gardeners can do to combat drought.

We should also ask ourselves whether it's our fault or the water companies' that April-planted trees and shrubs die for lack of water. For growing things, the recent lack of rain has been aggravated by lots of sunshine and some searing winds. Until the advent of garden centres with

piration more quickly than they can pull it up from roots that have had no chance to make close contact with the surrounding soil.

If you plant in autumn, you can get hold of bare-rooted trees and shrubs, dug from open ground, which will have far better root systems than anything grown in a pot. Well-developed roots, snuffling about in well-cared-for soil, will be a plant's best defence against drought.

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Donkeys are abused the world over. But in a corner of Devon lives a lady who kicks back on their behalf. By Jonathan Glancey



Eeyore's not-so-gloomy place

Benjamin was one of my early heroes. He was old and wise, and he watched. Watched as the pigs learnt to stand on two legs, eat at table and exploit the four-legged comrades on Manor Farm. He was slow to ire, but when his best friend, Boxer, the all-too-willing Shire, was promised retirement in clover fields, yet was in fact sent off to the knacker's yard to be turned into glue, Benjamin berated the other animals for not learning to read, as he had done. He tossed his long ears at the sign on the side of the departing lorry. He galloped after it as it rumbled down the lane, trying to warn Boxer of the fate the pigs had decided for him. It was too late.

Poor Benjamin. He saw the writing not just on the side of the lorry, but on the wall a long time before. And, in his cryptic way, he tried to warn his comrades that the pigs were really no better than men: cruel and greedy exploiters. And when the chips were down and his equine friend was in mortal danger, Benjamin ran his little hooves off.

I'm sure you recognise Benjamin, the donkey at the dark heart of George Orwell's political fairy-tale *Animal Farm*. I knew donkeys well from the days when I was still on four legs. And Benjamin's story reinforced my attachment to these delightful animals as I learnt to read when standing on two. Donkeys are lovely creatures to look at. Those mournful, Buster Keaton faces. Those wonderful ears, so long and so expressive.

Aesthetics aside, donkeys are also

exactly like Benjamin was – loyal, long-lived, tolerant, a horse's best friend, and, though stubborn (an under-rated virtue), loving companions. They get on famously with humans, responding to their names when called and following them from field to field. Because of this, they are easy to exploit – and, boy, are they exploited. In much of the Third World donkeys are the principal means of transporting goods, and even people, although they should not be ridden by adults.

I nearly came to blows in Cairo a few years ago over a donkey that had collapsed after a road-hog had crashed into his overloaded cart. As this suffering servant lay on the roadside, motorists hooted in anger (the accident meant they were forced to slow down) while the donkey's master took a whip to the protruding ribs of the dying beast.

Suffering donkeys are not the preserve of dusty African highways. Some of the cruellest owners are to be found in the British Isles. For 25 years, the extraordinary Elisabeth Svendsen has run a donkey sanctuary near Sidmouth on the south Devon coast. From taking Naughty Face, her first battered donkey, into care, Dr Svendsen (a Yorkshire lass, despite the name) now looks after more than 6,000 in Devon, and thousands more overseas, helped by 160 or so full-time staff and a steady flow of funds from people who care about donkeys.

If you ever feel long-faced and droopy-eared, a trip to the sanctuary (entrance free, contributions gratefully received) will have you feeling

frisky in minutes. This charity rescues abused animals, gives incalculable pleasure to disabled children and other visitors, and teaches us how to look after the animals in our stewardship. It has also become the world's leading centre for research into donkey health care. Dr Svendsen's exhaustive trips around the poorest parts of the world have led to a significant improvement in the health of working donkeys, without whom millions of rural families would go very hungry. Her honorary doctorate in 1992 was awarded to recognise her research into parasitical infestations and how to treat them in donkeys.

If Benjamin was an early hero, Dr Svendsen is a later heroine. Stubborn, energetic, inspiring, famously accident-prone, good-humoured and a fund of goodwill to people and animals, she is determined that no donkey will be carted to the knacker's yard when there is a field of clover for it in Devon. She sees the world through donkeys' eyes, and talks in equine terms. She "gallops" here, she says, and "trots" there. "Here" and "there" may be Lamu (where she set up the first international outpost of the sanctuary, in 1987) or the infamous Spanish village of Villanueva de la Vera, where each year a small donkey is forced to carry the fattest man around its streets while being tormented by men. At the end of this bizarre procession (a replay of an episode in the village's history), the donkey is sometimes battered to death. Dr Svendsen and her team have been threatened with death, and shot at, by locals for

whom donkey-baiting is considered good, drunken sport.

It might also be Ireland, where donkeys are treated with widespread contempt. Svendsen was alerted to the plight of Ireland in 1983; he had been left alone for 18 years on a small island off the Irish coast by a local farmer.

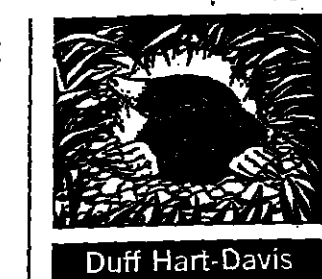
Yes, 18 years. Not only do donkeys live a long time (the average for a well-kept donkey is 37, although some live to be 50), but they crave company. When Svendsen brought to Devon a donkey that had been cruelly treated on Blackpool's beaches, it was reunited with two old friends after a seven-year absence. The two Blackpool veterans brayed non-stop as their pal arrived, rolled in the clover together, and then, walking on either

side of the new arrival, took him on a tour of his new home.

Not long ago, the sanctuary took in a donkey after a call from the wife of a Welshman who had threatened to shoot it in front of his children because they had lost interest in it and this would be a lesson for them.

The Donkey Sanctuary is a haven of human and equine kindness in a lovely part of the world. Trot there this weekend, and try stroking the donkeys' ears rather than sticking pins in them as we were taught to do, if only in cardboard. You will find yourself in clover and frolic all the way home.

The Donkey Sanctuary, Sidmouth, Devon (01395 578222)



Duff Hart-Davis

Brewed on his birthday, the new beer was called Old Ric

With his long grey beard and glittering eye, he puts one in mind of the Ancient Mariner. But appearances deceive. Ric Sainy is no haunted bore, burrowing wedding guests with tales of shipwreck and catastrophe. He is the welcoming landlord of the Old Spot inn in the Gloucestershire town of Dursley, and his claim to fame is that the beer named after him, Old Ric, has been selected for national distribution by the Wetherspoon chain of pubs.

Although addicted to ale ever since he can remember, Ric was not always a publican. He spent his first 25 working years as a draughtsman-designer in the town planning department of Cambridgeshire County Council. Then, in the Seventies, when staff cuts were threatened, he decided he was through with local government, and manoeuvred to have himself made redundant.

His idea was to look for a pub in Devon, where he had been on diving holidays; but he was waylaid by a crafty newspaper advertisement, and in 1978 he landed at the New Inn in Waterley Bottom, a deep valley near the south-western limits of the Cotswolds.

There he created a stir by importing his favourite ales across country. A friend who worked in Cambridge came down once a fortnight in his Range Rover, towing a trailer specially designed to hold 11 kilderkins (18-gallon casks). These arrived full of Greene King Abbot and Adnams ales and, once emptied, were filled with the products of the Smiles brewery in Bristol for the return journey.

Soon Ric himself was putting away 20 pints a day, and his weight went up to 18 stone. His fortunes improved still further when he fell in with another heavyweight imbibor, Chas Wright, who at that stage was distributing Theakston beers, from Yorkshire. When Ric, Chas and the late, lamented Jasper Eley – a third 18-stoner – went out drinking together, they were a formidable trio.

In 1985 Chas restarted an old brewery in the village of Uley, close by, and began producing

traditional ales with porcine names: (in ascending order of strength) Hoghead bitter, Schweinbräu, Pig's Ear, Old Spot, Pigor Mortis and Severn Boar. Then in 1992 Ric bought the Fox and Hounds, a run-down cider-house in Dursley with a reputation so rough that, when I mentioned it to Clare, the girl who cuts my hair, her only observation was "Phworrrrhh!"

With Chas's agreement, Ric changed its name to the Old Spot, and redesigned the inside of the 18th-century building to give it a traditional look. With canned music banished and Uley ales on tap, the place soon began to flourish – and in 1994 the reputation of its landlord was further consolidated by the appearance of a new beer named after him.

That summer Mel Griffiths, head brewer at Uley, was commissioned to produce a special ale for the Glastonbury music festival, and came up with a premium bitter, half-way in colour and strength between his normal bitter and the rich, dark Old Spot. The new ale went down well at the festival, but there was some left over. "I'll shift it for you," said Mr Sainy – and as it had been brewed on his birthday (6 June), a unanimous decision was taken to call it Old Ric.

Such was the demand that the new recruit became a fixture; and now, with Wetherspoon's backing, it will go nationwide. Its namesake, down to a modest 13½ stone, has reined in his own consumption; some days he drinks no alcohol at all, but on "good" days he still gets through 10 or 12 pints.

As he says: "If you really do enjoy beer, and you're having a laugh, it's all too easy to keep tanking up."

When a stranger walks into the pub, the place does not go quiet: conversations carry on, and the newcomer is absorbed into the cordial atmosphere. The secret of Ric's success lies not just in the excellence of his beer, but in the aura he creates, in the way his enjoyment of ale rubs off on customers. "After all," he says, "I'd rather have a beer named after me than a block of flats."



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The St George's est arrivé! But without more rain, this may not be a good year for the strong and meaty wild mushroom. By Daniel Butler



A fungus flavour to slay for

"I found a couple of kilos at the end of March, but none since," says Clive Houlder, a professional mushroom picker and wholesaler. "That's a month early, but there's been little rain since and they've stopped coming up."

The St George's Mushroom (*Tricholoma gambosum*) is so named because it traditionally appears on the English patron saint's day on 23 April, although in fact it normally does not force its way to the surface until about now, the first week in May. It is the first widely available edible mushroom of the new season.

Although edible mushrooms can be found almost all year round, early spring is comparatively barren, a time when frost-hardy species such as winter chanterelles die off. As a result, the delicious St

George's are doubly valuable: "My early ones were going for £25 a kilo," Clive Houlder says with a smile. "Normally I sell them for £15 to restaurants. At Covent Garden they fetch £8-£10 – but that's still worthwhile when you can get several kilos from just one ring."

The St George's is a strong, meaty mushroom with solid, dense, creamy flesh and white gills. It has a powerful, meaty smell. These qualities explain its popularity among gastronomes, who appreciate the chunky texture and powerful flavour. Indeed, Clive Houlder says that some chefs find the flavour too strong, but other restaurants lap the mushrooms up. "It's got a lovely strong flavour, almost perfumed," he says, adding that the best are cut young (you should never pull up wild fungi because it can damage the

underground mycelial threads). As the fungi age, the delicate perfume changes to a stronger, meaty taste which goes particularly well with chicken.

Although some guides claim they are usually found on chalky ground, St George's can grow on any soil. But they do prefer unfertilised old pasture because, like most mushrooms, they spring from a delicate subterranean network of mycelial threads. If undisturbed, the mycelium will continue to push up untidy rings of mushrooms for years, even centuries. When you pick a St George's, it could well come from the same threads that fed our medieval poisoners.

There is one poisonous species, *Enuloma sinuatum*, which could theoretically be mistaken for a St George's but, according to Clive Houl-

der, there is little danger of confusion for the amateur with a good illustrated guide: "There is only one chunky white mushroom with that distinctive, meaty smell around now," he says. "Although the experts talk about 'kid glove texture' and so on, it's the smell that is the real giveaway – so strong that a basketful of these mushrooms has an almost overpowering perfume." In addition, unlike the rare and solitary *E. sinuatum*, St George's tend to come up in profusion in large, untidy rings. In spite of his unusually early first find, Clive Houlder is pessimistic about the coming year: "We desperately need rain, but our area of north Norfolk has been officially declared a semi-arid area," he says gloomily. "Let's just hope for a warm, wet summer."

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Just getting into his Stride

As his techno sneakers walk out of the shops, Justin Deakin is walking tall as the hottest property in footwear. By Melanie Rickey

Sitting on a bright yellow inflatable sofa in his ultra-modern studio space in north London, the 27-year-old shoe designer Justin Deakin looks like a bright-eyed young thing with the earnestness of a Bisto Kid. Except he is no newcomer.

Deakin is the hottest footwear designer of the moment. Judged the Best New Designer for 1997 at the recent Footwear Awards, his range of techno sneakers, Stride, is on show in the Review Gallery at the Design Museum.

This is no mean feat. Stride sneakers have only been on sale for six weeks, and are selling out so quickly from shops across Europe that Deakin and his partner (in business and in love), Linzi Boyd, are grinning from ear to ear.

Leeds-born Deakin has been in the shoe business since 1990, when he was a buyer for a local fashion store. Rather than taking the traditional route via a footwear college such as Hackney's Cordwainers, he came to design from a commercial point of view.

"There was nothing around that we wanted to buy in the early Nineties. The only decent shoes cost at least £175, and everyone was wearing biker boots, so we designed something we wanted to wear and could actually afford."



He teamed up with a friend, Craig Tate, to form a traditional, but fashion-based men's and women's company called Nicholas Deakins, which is still in business, although Deakin left in 1994 to pursue his own lines. The first to leave his stable were Herbert

Joe and Judi Joe, named after his mother and father, which fused traditional cobbling methods with hi-tech soles. But his burning ambition was always Stride.

Once they decided on a name and a logo for their sneakers it took two years, five prototypes, several trips to Korea, and more than £250,000 to

launch Stride. When he talks about this monumental effort there is a twinkle in his eye. This is a designer who doesn't talk about ethereal creativity. He talks sole units, uppers, price points and construction with a broad Leeds accent and a jingle of his chunky silver jewellery. "All we wanted to do was develop a new kind of footwear that used sports technology, but that people could wear every day," he says.

The trainers are a visual feast, with references as diverse as Evel Knievel's Velcro-

fastened motorcycling boots, to puffed jackets and work boots, as well as from mainstream trainers. Christine Atha, curator of The Review Gallery, says, "The trainers are there as a contemporary idea, as well as a typical example of today's culture. They recall 1960s TV shows with their names, for example Stealth and Stingray, and also act as containers for so many references."

When Atha first approached Deakin, she told him "you're part of the trainer revolution". Deakin, however, still can't be-

lieve his luck. "It's brilliant, to get into the Design Museum you'd think it would take years." It has taken him months.

On Thursday, the opening night of the Design Museum's latest exhibition, The Power of Erotic Design, many visitors strayed to the glass cabinets featuring Stride, and the Just Deakin/Inflate collaboration, the inflatable flip-flop.

"They were crowding around the glass cabinets having a good look," says Atha. She is showing Stride alongside the ad campaign for the

Justin Deakin, wearing the inflatable flip-flops which are on show at the Design Museum, with his partner Linzi Boyd and their trainers, Stride. From left to right: Shuttle, Zenith, Bomber and Viper

shoes, which features various styles in the context of greasy-spoon food: deep-fried with chips and peas, in a pie dish, or as boil-in-a-bag, with the catchline "put em on your plates ... mate".

Stride is a complete design concept, from the brand name to the logo to the shoe, and it works. Richard Wharton, from Offspring, a shop in Covent Garden dedicated to trainers, has been selling them for the past few weeks and watching them leave the shop in droves. "I wish I'd bought more of them, they appeal to everyone: it's not a black thing or a gay thing, although both groups are buying them, it's a fashion and club thing."

He is waiting for the red, white and blue variations on the current styles to come out next month, and will increase his order. Until then, catch them if you can. Deakin is passionate about keeping them reasonably priced – and £69.99 (or £64.99 for the girls) is a small price to pay for an instant design classic.

Stride will be on show at the Review Gallery at the Design Museum until August. The Design Museum, 28 Shad Thames, London SE1 (0171-378 6055). Stride is available from Offspring, 60 Neal Street, London WC2; Aspect, 85 Bridge Street, Manchester; branches of Cobra Sports; branches of JD Sports and Hip, 9 & 14 Thornion Arcade, Leeds.

Under the counter

with Lindsay Calder

Over the past week I have been considering divorce, and naming as a co-respondent the Ariston dishwasher. The problem was, it just didn't go "on and on and on". While I was away for a week, my spouse managed to clog it – no doubt with a large piece of carbohydrate from one of the many fish suppers he consumed – then piled up the rest of the dishes in Greek plate-balancing fashion. I returned to a kitchen that bore an uncanny resemblance to that mice 'n' cockroaches kitchen-sink display in London Zoo. If he thought I was going to start washing up, after four years of dipping not so much as a finger in a washing-up bowl, he had another thing coming. No dishwasher = no washing up = no cooking. Understood?

He understood, but was going to give it one last try. Two nights, a pizza and a Waitrose finger buffet later, we had to accept that what we had in the kitchen was an ex-dishwasher that no amount of pumping and knob-twisting was going to bring back. It had spent the first six years of its life with a sitcom writer, before we inherited it; then four years dealing with our congealed cat bowls – a good tinnings, but time for a replacement.

After three hours of bickering in a retail park off the North Circular, the decree nisi was drawing closer. The mere thought of a retail park makes me want to weep – these are just not the sort of shops I was born to shop in: Food Giant, Boozie Barn, Nevada Bob's Golf Superstore, The Most-Hideous-Drayton-And-Leatherette-Sofas-In-The-World shop. One thing Diana, Queen of Hearts, has to be thankful for is that I bet she's never had to purchase white goods from a retail park in her life. When she's feeling down, she should just think about that.

My Prince never did come, so I had to discuss the advantages of the condenser method with a spotty assistant who was really only interested in selling me an extended warranty. My spouse was in danger-mode – affected by that macho-techno fever which makes men want the biggest, the best and, of course, the most expensive. I caught him eyeing up the behind of a Miele model, which at £750, he was convinced was for us. This is the man who has just spent £799 on a fold-up pushbike which looks like something a six-year-old would get for Christmas, so he didn't surprise me. Eventually we compromised with a Bosch, on the basis that it could be delivered asap, so would cut down on restaurant/takeaway bills.

Delivery would be between 8.30am and 6pm. Very handy. Macho-techno-spouse had decided not to pay the £25 extra to have it installed – he would do it himself. I planned, however, to pay the £25 when it arrived, as judging by the amount of time it took him to disconnect the old one we'd be eating out for another week. When it did arrive, at 4pm, "no, that would be another job, love, wouldn't it? You'll need to call the office and re-book." So they refused to fit it, leaving me in the middle of the kitchen with a bloody Bosch without the promised "decor trim". I quote the last words of spotty assistant when I asked him to make sure it had a decor trim: "Positive. I'll tell you what, if it doesn't you can have the one on me, mate, at home." So, get on and here pronto, mate, and coming round to change it to rip it off myself.

Bosch 6032 dishwasher: £469.99, from Curry's. Pizza large supreme, £11.49; Pizza Hut; finger buffet items from a selection, Waitrose.

Be a sport – but do you really need those trainers?

Teen fashion dictates the footwear, so Brigid McConville visited the Reebok lab

Imagine a world without trainers. Impossible, perhaps, for this generation of teens, whose very identity can depend on what they have on their feet. Not so hard for their parents, who may still remember a time when daps served just as well, weren't scorned as totally "sad" and didn't cost a fortune. After all, the ancient Greeks didn't wear trainers to run the original marathon. So are they really necessary?

I put this heretical idea to Spencer White, a genial American boffin who runs a hi-tech laboratory in Boston peopled by jogging robots in Reeboks and professors from MIT. As Reebok's Director of Research Engineering, he warns that

without decent trainers many of us who do aerobics, running or other sports would be hobbling around injured.

"Your foot bone is connected to your leg bone, and so on up the chain," he says. "Your foot is an extremely complicated mechanism, and if it's not a stable platform it can cause pain in the knee and as far as your lower back."

Proper footwear protects you from injuries such as plantar fasciitis (sore heels caused by impact or not enough support) and shin splints (aches in the shins caused by lack of cushioning and stability).

Mr White's Human Performance Engineering Laboratory also has computer

simulator machines which twist and bend and pound the latest Reebok prototypes in the new science of bio-engineering. Sometimes, real live athletes come to play basketball in the gym which is part of the laboratory, so that high-speed videos can record and monitor the performance of their shoes.

"There have been dramatic improvements in footwear for athletes over the last 20 years," says Spencer White. "But every foot is a different shape; every individual moves differently and has different needs." His aim was to make a running shoe which could supply all these needs, and with the new DMX Series 2000 he believes he has done it.

These trainers feel as light as a feather and look entirely synthetic, with semi-transparent blue soles rather like out-sized bubble wrap. "This is the new underfoot cushioning and stabilising system," explains Mr White.

"It has been tested on more than 700 runners over thousands of miles and is better than and dramatically different from anything out there."

What is "out there" is already pretty sophisticated. Many of today's more expensive trainers have a "midsole" between the upper (toe box, heel box and fastenings) and "outside" or rubber bottom of the shoe. Midsoles are often made with air capsules, or gel using "energy return" chambers designed to cushion the shock generated when your foot hits the ground – which may otherwise travel up to your knees or lower back, with potentially painful results.

Some manufacturers use a shock-absorbent, spongy material in the midsole. Others use a hi-tech foam. Still others use adjoining chambers or a honeycomb effect so that shocks can be distributed along the shoe. But the bulky outer sole of the DMX 2000 running shoe is, according to Reebok, a revolutionary development which they plan to adapt to other trainers in the future.

Its "active air transfer" sole has 10 hollow chambers connected by a network of channels that regulate the flow of air under your foot as you run. As your heel hits the ground, the air is pushed forward, stiffening the sole to protect the foot from rolling inwards ("overpronation"). Then, as you move forward on to the ball of your foot, the air is forced back under the heel,

CAREFUL BUYER'S CHECKLIST

- The time to buy new trainers is when the cushioning of your old pair is worn out. Look from the back at the side of the shoe to see if it has become tilted. If in doubt take your old pair into a shop and try



on a new one at the same time to compare how they feel.

- Don't buy brand X just because you liked them last time. The technology of trainers moves fast: they could be very different this year.
- Don't shop for trainers first thing in the morning. Wait until your feet have warmed up and expanded before you try on a new pair, or you may find they are too tight when you get into action.

absorbing the impact of the next step. It is a bouncy, rolling feeling as the air bubbles shift under your feet, but once you get your sea legs they are remarkably comfortable and springy, cushioning your feet

as you run. Reebok clearly hope that the DMX 2000 will be the running shoe of the future, but the main consideration when choosing trainers is what you will be using them for.

"A serious runner needs a running shoe," says Mr White. "And if you do aerobics four or five times a week you will need an aerobics shoe. But if you run occasionally, but also play tennis, then a 'cross-trainer' is the shoe for you." Cross-trainers should be light, comfortable and flexible with soles that will suit a range of surfaces, from modern gym floors to grass athletics tracks.

But do trainers need to cost an arm and a leg? "That cost depends on the quality of the materials and the research-and-development effort that went into them," says Spencer White – which perhaps explains why a pair of DMX 2000s will set you back £110. The US annual spend on running shoes is \$7bn (£4.3bn) – equivalent to the cost of relieving the Third World's debt burden.

So are we soon to face demands from teenagers to fork out huge sums for bulky-soled trainers which they will grow out of – or wear out – within a few months?

It's true that children's feet are still growing, and if they are playing a lot of one sport – football, for instance – a good pair of the right (football) boots is the best protection.

But Spencer White has comforting words for parents caught in the battle of *Which Trainers?*

"For trainers that are mostly worn to school, and where there are no foot problems, the bigger issue is durability. You don't need to spend outrageous amounts of money."

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Within the division bell

Stucco-fronted St George's Square SW1 was purpose-built by Thomas Cubitt to house ambassadors and Members of Parliament. Flat 4 on the second floor of No 96 has two bedrooms, sitting-room and kitchen. It has video entraphone. Ground rent is £200 pa. £235,000 through Daintons (0171-834 8001).

Fentimam Road, Kennington, is where up-market MPs buy London homes. Sir Geoffrey Howe had a house there, as did the Tory minister Tony Baldry and Sir John Hannam. The Victorian terraced houses are substantial but cosy. A newly refurbished four-storey town house awaits a newly elected Member. It has a kitchen/breakfast room on the lower ground floor, a double drawing-room linked by dividing doors on the raised ground, master bedroom on the first floor, and three more bedrooms on the top floor. Offers around £375,000 to Daniel Corbett (0171-225 1500).

Claverton Street, SW1, backs on to Dolphin Square, famous for housing MPs of all hues and handy for the House, as well as the square's swimming pool and restaurant. No 58B is a one-bedroom ground-floor flat with 14ft drawing-room in an early Victorian stucco house. £115,000 through Dauntons

Rosalind Russell

As buyers confront the boom, Nic Cicutti assesses how best to repay a loan

Each month, tens of thousands of prospective home buyers enter the property maze, buoyed by the seemingly relentless rise in house prices of the past few months. After the first flush of excitement, when a buyer hears their bid has been accepted by the seller, comes the hard decision: just where is the money to be borrowed from and how will the debt be paid off?

There are several ways of paying off a home loan. One that regained its popularity in recent years is the straightforward repayment mortgage.

Under the arrangement, every monthly payment involves paying off part of the capital borrowed and a slice of interest. The exact amount of each changes over the borrowing period, with repayments skewed so that in the first five years or so, nearly all payments are of the interest. Thereafter the ratio of capital to interest repayments alters quite quickly.

A repayment mortgage will at first sight seem dearer than an interest-only one. On a typical £50,000 loan, repayments based on a 7 per cent variable rate over 25 years will cost £409.20 a month.

That compares with £265.60 a month for the interest payments alone, a difference of £143.60. But borrowers taking out that kind of mortgage will still have to find an alternative mechanism for paying off their loan.

Ian Darby, marketing director at John Charcol, the largest mortgage brokers in the UK, says: "Repayment mortgages are the most flexible in that you can *increase* or *reduce* the amount you pay each month simply by lengthening or reducing the repayment period."

But he points out that the "front-end load" on the loan, with little except interest being paid in the first few years, can be dangerous. "If you move after five or six years, you have paid hardly any of the capital off, which means that you may have to

Paying off a mortgage

Company Name	Monthly Payment	Interest Payment	Balance
Axa Equity & Law	79.84	79.90	63.45
Legal Medical	75.10	74.20	58.70
Friends provident	77.58	76.60	61.15
Guardian	86.64	85.50	73.51
Legal & General	68.20	67.48	70.00
Norwich Union	74.00	73.20	70.00
Scottish Amicable	74.00	73.30	76.60
Scottish Life	76.02	76.28	76.60
Scottish Provident	77.25	76.40	80.80
Scottish Widows	76.00	76.48	76.48
Standard Life	76.65	76.09	79.57

start all over again."

All other mechanisms for meeting the capital debt on a mortgage involve setting up a parallel repayment system, usually investment-related.

The most common is the endowment. That is a relatively low-risk investment into which payments are made over 25 years (sometimes less), in the expectation that the value of the sum at maturity is greater than

the value of the mortgage taken out.

Endowments can be either unit-linked, reflecting stock-market ups and downs, or with-profits, in which a bonus is added to the policy every year and a final payment paid at

Ian Darby says: "Endowments are better value than is sometimes claimed. They offer cheap life cover, they involve a cautious investment strategy and the fact that once a

bonus is added to a policy it cannot be taken away means that it offers some protection against down-turns in the market."

Mr Darkey adds that they are, however, a long-term investment and can be inflexible for people who stop payments early for perfectly legitimate reasons, such as divorce or redundancy.

Because the setting-up charges are levied at the start of the policy, people "surrendering" an endowment in the early years risk receiving less than they paid in.

One investment growing in popularity is the personal equity plan, or PEP. These are schemes whereby savings in the PEP roll up and are paid tax-free, unlike endowments, where 18 per cent or so is levied.

PEPs are flexible: it is possible to stop and start payments into them at will, without penalty. Charges are spread throughout the life of the policy, with no heavy up-front fees.

Most PEPS also involve a significant degree of risk and may not be suitable for people who do not want to take a chance on the value of their funds dropping suddenly. However, Roddy Kohn, a financial adviser at Bristol-based Kohn Cougar, adds: "They also offer the chance of paying off a debt early, as long as investment performance is good."

A policy launched this week is intended to offer the tax benefits and flexibility of a PEP with the safer

approach of a unit-linked endowment. Legal & General says its PEP with life cover attached is cheaper than most equivalent endowments, bearing in mind similar investment returns after tax, as shown in the tables.

But, as Roddy Kohn says, "the arguments are not entirely fair because they are not comparing like with like. It is easy to find a PEP and life cover that are much cheaper

To the company's argument that it offers ease and convenience, he retorts: "Nonsense. Any independent financial adviser can come up with something better than this with just a few minutes' research."

Mr Kohn is a strong supporter of the pensions mortgage, where people make contributions into a personal pension and use the 25 per cent tax-free lump sum they receive at retirement to help pay off the loan.

He admits: "Some argue that you should not confuse pensions and mortgages and that the lump sum should be used for retirement purposes. But most people don't pay enough into their pension anyway. If you can tie the two together so that they are paying off their mortgage at the same time, so much the better."

He adds that in this instance, flexibility comes from alternative investment vehicles if contributions into a personal pension should stop for any reason.

His point is indirectly backed by Mr Darby, who says: "A lot of people think that there must be a specific savings policy to go with an interest-only mortgage. But, in fact, many mortgages are paid off in all sorts of ways."

gages are paid off in all sorts of ways, including redundancy payments, inheritance and so on. All these are valid ways of paying off your loan."

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Sifting wheat from chaff



Rachel Fixsen on profiting from the overload of fund information

Investment fund managers seem to delight in giving us a wealth of information in their advertisements. Sadly, much of it is confusing – and next to useless when it comes to making investment decisions.

For example, ads for many PEPs broadcast glittering growth figures, hoping we will be enticed by the sweet smell of success. The results are obvious. "A lot of small investors just look at the top-performing fund and go for that," says Ian Millward, investment marketing director at independent financial advisers Chase de Vere. Is this the right thing to do? "If you just do that then it's absolutely crazy. A lot of top funds have taken big risks to get there," he says.

John Spiers, investment director at IFA and stockbroker BEST Investments, says a fund's historical record may be of no relevance because it might be under different management or have changed in size.

Personalities behind the money play a vital role. Prolific Technology, an international growth unit trust, has come first in three-, five- and 10-year performance league tables. But Mr Spiers says it has had at least three changes of management in the past five years. In this instance at least, past performance on its own is almost irrelevant as a way of assessing the future.

Similarly, confidence in investment guru Jim Slater has helped propel interest in Johnson Fry's Slater Growth Fund, run by Mr Slater's son, Mark, who follows his father's techniques. In the late Sixties, Jim Slater became so influential in the markets that he triggered a number of sharp

falls on the stock market when he announced he was switching to cash.

The Johnson Fry Slater Growth Fund had assets of around £500,000 a year ago but now has around £33m under management, and has grown 54.96 per cent in the past 12 months.

But Mr Spiers warns: "If they achieved their outperformance when they were very small, their techniques may not work with a big fund."

Past performance figures can give vital information provided a fund's management is consistent, says Roger Adams, executive director of investment trusts at SBC Warburg. But successful fund managers can retain their job title but in practice be drawn away from decision-making.

Then there is the question of performance tables themselves. The most common is the cumulative performance table. This shows the development of an investment over one, three and five years, with income reinvested. Cumulative performance tables are of use only when weeding out really bad performers, Mr Spiers says. "We would break it down into discrete periods showing each year in a five-year period." Ideally, a fund would beat its benchmark in every one of those five years.

Try to look for funds run by companies which have demonstrated good performance across a wide range of sectors. Mr Millward says. Find out what the fund's philosophy and risk profile are and make sure you are happy with them.

Volatility is one way to assess risk. And measuring risk is complex, and often subjective. An emerging market fund is generally seen as riskier than a UK gilt fund, but other factors come into it, which is where a broker or financial adviser can help.

You are usually advised to hold an investment in a fund for a few years. But keep your eyes peeled for changes.

Some funds change their investment objectives. M&G is considering changing the remit of four equity funds to offer a broader range of funds. M&G says income levels are not going to be affected negatively.

Small investors can in theory do their own research, though they need a lot of time and access to specialist financial information. But help is at hand. Some companies publish their own guides:

Chase de Vere PEPGUIDE – Chase de Vere Investments plc, 63 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3JX. Phone 0800 326 092 (11.2.95)

BEST Investment's Personal Equity Plan Recommendations – BEST Investment Brokers, 20 Masons Yard, Duke Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6BU. Phone 0171 321 0100

Private Investor Guide, co Jane Beley, Investment Trust Department, SBC Warburg, 1 Finsbury Avenue, London EC2M 3PP (1.5)

Wait and see what the new Budget brings

The first indication I had that Thursday's general election might deliver a historic result was when my local Conservative agent called in at lunch-time on polling day with the morning's returns from the tellers. For South Suffolk's Tim Yeo to lose his seat would mean a disaster of unimaginable proportions for the Tories. Well, he held on, but the disaster for the Conservatives was pretty big none the less.

Will it be a disaster for the markets? Traders seem not to think so, although there was some inevitable profit-taking once the polls closed. This was not especially a judgement on the result. On Thursday night share prices in London closed at an all-time high, buoyed by an enthusiastic Wall Street. With America down on the day, there was every encouragement to sell: the surprise is that the reaction was not greater.

Many believe London share prices would have been even higher had it not been for the uncertainty created by the general election. Mr Blair can now do just about what he likes, but markets are betting that New Labour really does mean a new approach.

So where do we go from here? Probably the one area we should not worry about too much is the level of sterling. Selling did develop early yesterday in London as Far Eastern investors reacted to the scale of the victory. Next week, the new Chancellor will be meeting the Governor of the Bank of England. Opinion may be divided over whether interest rates should go up, but a rise next week must be on the cards. Getting it out of the way early may limit its effect on the market.

Utility shares, not surprisingly, have lost some friends. The windfall tax is a reality. And with such a large majority, perhaps the new administration will feel emboldened enough to pitch it at the top of the expected range. They will feel they have a mandate to introduce policies requiring funding – which is why all eyes will be on the first Labour Budget.

Where else will they raise money? The big threat to the stock market remains with tinkering with advanced corporation tax. Even though such a move has been widely debated, it is difficult to imagine a cut not having a knock-on effect on share values. Yet the stock market is facing the prospect with relative equanimity.



Brian Tora

We come back to the belief that a new era in British politics has dawned. If so, the relative health of the economy, the rising demand for financial assets and the beneficial effect of a buoyant Wall Street are all much more important than the change of government.

History certainly does not encourage us to believe that stock markets prosper under a Labour administration. While the Heath government, 1970-1974, was hardly an investor's friend, the reality is that much more money has been made by investors during the Thatcher/Major years than when Wilson and Callaghan were in power. The market is saying that Tony Blair will not wish to upset the financial apple cart. Let us hope it is right.

Just at present it seems right to follow a policy of masterly inactivity. One thing is certain. Taxes are unlikely to go down for investors when the next Budget arrives. Waiting for the measures to be introduced means uncertainty that may produce volatility.

Once we know how precisely a Labour hand on the tiller will change things, we can assess which shares and stock market sectors will prosper and which should be avoided. Industries with a predominance of low-waged employees, such as catering and pub companies, look set to remain out of favour for a spell while the prospect of a national minimum wage is debated. As for the banks and financial services industry – expect tougher regulation.

My advice is to wait and watch. There is no reason to expect a major setback in the market, but equally why should the rise continue? It is worth ensuring that all your tax breaks have been dealt with, such as PEPs, in case contributions are capped. If you have money to invest, you will probably not come to much harm by waiting to see what the new Budget may hold. But in the end Bill Clinton, not Mr Blair may influence the course of British shares the most.

Brian Tora is chairman of the investment strategy committee at Greig Middleton & Co (0171 379 8071)

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How to bridge a gap

Rob Howe's pensions represent only 13% of his earnings

NAME: Rob Howe
AGE: 28
OCCUPATION: Planning surveyor in the construction industry.

BACKGROUND: Rob has been working for his current employer since last November. His earnings, including part-time sports editorial work, are about £16,000 a year.

Rob is buying his home with a £36,000 mortgage with Alliance & Leicester, fixed at 7.45 per cent until this November. He has free shares, worth about £1,430, from his former membership of the society. He has two endowments in conjunction with his mortgage. His projected expenditure budget suggests that he has about £1,500 a year potentially available for investment. He is reasonably cautious in his investment strategy.

Rob is not eligible to join his employer's pension scheme for two years but does have generous preserved benefits from his previous employment. He is considering getting married in three or four years.

THE PROBLEMS: Rob's most pressing issues revolve around planning for retirement and whether the current endowment policies he has will return sufficient funds to repay the mortgage in 20 years.

THE ADVISER: Geoff Kangley, of Kangley Financial Planning, in Sheffield (Tel 0114-235 3555).

THE ADVICE: "I have studied Rob's projected annual expenditure budget and employment contract.

One striking thing is that his contract states that during the first year of employment his entitlement to sick pay is 23 days on full pay plus 23 days at half-pay within the first 52 weeks. After the first year, this doubles to 46 days on full pay and the same on half-pay. Thereafter statutory sick pay of £54.55 a week will be paid up to 28 weeks.

He has insurance covering the cost of mortgage repayments in the event



Looking to the future: Rob Howe wants to buy a home and make the best possible provision for his retirement

of redundancy, illness or accident. But Rob would still suffer financial hardship in the event of being off work through accident or illness.

Rob should consider permanent health insurance (PHI). He could restrict the premium cost by deferring the date when income benefit becomes payable. If Rob wanted PHI cover worth 50 per cent of salary payable to age 65, the premium would range between £18 per month for level benefit payments deferred for one month, to £35 per month for escalating benefits, deferred two months.

I would also recommend critical illness (CI) cover for not less than his mortgage loan. CI cover pays out on diagnosis of a range of serious diseases, including cancer and heart attacks. The cost would be about £10 per month, including waiver of premiums in the event of prolonged illness.

With the possibility of an increase in interest rates, Rob ought to find out whether there is a redemption penalty on his mortgage. If not, he should lock

into a lower fixed rate. As for his endowments, Rob should obtain projections from the life companies of how much they will pay out at maturity. If a shortfall is identified Rob could consider bridging that gap by way of monthly contributions to a personal equity plan (PEP).

An independent financial adviser can identify the monthly contribution level into the PEP by working backwards from the value of any shortfall, after assuming growth of, say, 9 per cent.

Rob's free shares can be placed into a PEP (on top of any other PEP limits) within 42 days of issue. However, unless he intends to hold those shares in the long term, given that he is a base-rate tax payer, the effect of PEP charges could outweigh any tax advantage.

As for his pension, unfortunately, Rob will not become eligible for scheme membership with his current employer until April 1999. If he remained in employment until 65, he would accumulate a maximum pension entitlement of 57 to 64 per cent of his

final pensionable salary. A lump sum death-in-service benefit is provided of two-times pensionable salary. The scheme appears to make no provision for inflation-linked escalation of pension payments. If he were to be absent and sick pay had ceased, pension contributions may be suspended for the remaining period of such absence. He should, however, still join if possible and also pay additional voluntary contributions when he can afford it.

With regard to the retained pension benefits from Rob's previous employment with Henry Boot, a construction firm, that company operated a "humdinger" of a final salary scheme, providing benefits on an "n-45ths" basis. This scheme means he required only 30 years' service for a maximum pension. At today's value, his pension will be worth £5,171 per annum.

I have asked the trustees to give me a transfer value on his fund. My provisional estimate suggests a return of between 6 and 8 per cent will be needed to match the value of benefits given up on transfer. Before he decides whether to do so, much depends on his - presently cautious - attitude to investment, plus assumptions of future rates of interest and inflation.

Looking ahead, let's assume that Rob might not remain with his employer until retirement. If they parted company in, say, four years, he would have been in scheme membership for only two of them.

By my calculations, the total of the two preserved pensions he has would represent only 13 per cent of his current gross earnings or, by viciously pruning his costs, some 24 per cent of his spending in retirement. Clearly, there is a substantial gap.

Rob ought to think about investing an amount similar to the 5 per cent he will be expected to pay as a personal contribution on to his employer's pension scheme in two years. This could be made into a PEP giving him greater flexibility in the event of a house move or his future marriage. Any such PEP investment could also establish the base for his "flotation shareholding".

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Watchdog should tread carefully

Pensions Act: A series by Stephanie Hawthorne

The regulation of company pension schemes has been a contentious subject since Robert Maxwell, the media tycoon, tumbled off his yacht in 1992 with more than £400m of his employees' pension funds unaccounted for.

His death and the much-publicised fate of the Maxwell pensioners led to the Pensions Act and with it the formation of the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority (Opra), the regulatory body for more than 200,000 occupational schemes. Opra has draconian discretionary powers with a punishment for every transgression.

Harriet Dawes, a partner at Lovell White Durrant, pensions law experts, said: "Opra is being set up as a third line

of protection for members and schemes." The trustees have the primary responsibility for seeing that all is well. They will rely on expert advisers, including actuaries and auditors, who must "whistle-blow" to Opra in certain circumstances if the rules are broken.

Scheme members who are worried that something is wrong can contact Opra or talk to Public Concern at Work. This is a charity which gives legal help to people who are worried that something is wrong in their workplace.

Opra's powers are statutory and are laid out in the Pensions Act. It has inspectors similar to those of the Department of Trade and Industry, who will be able to obtain warrants to enter and search premises to examine people and require them to produce documents and publish reports of investigations.

One of Opra's chief duties will be financial supervision. It must be informed if there are failures to comply with the requirement to pay scheduled

pension contributions, if the minimum funding requirement - the amount of assets each fund must have should it be wound up - is not met and in other circumstances.

Opra can remove trustees for any serious or persistent breach of the rules and appoint new ones. It can even wind up a pensions scheme. Indeed, its very powers lead some pensions experts to warn that the watchdog should not come down too hard on errant schemes, at least for a while.

Stewart Ritchie, a pensions expert at Scottish Equitable, says: "I hope it will not throw the book at people whose only crime is to inadvertently fail to satisfy some detail of the immensely complex pensions law. Unless Opra can perform its functions efficiently and effectively, the trend away from occupational to personal pensions can only accelerate."

Similarly, Oliver Rowlands, director of Alexander Clay trustee services practice, warns: "Opra must adopt a sensitive approach if the new

system is to work, otherwise trustees may simply call it a day."

John Hayes, Opra chairman, is prepared to let the Act, which came into force last month, settle down for a while before baring its teeth.

He said: "People will make mistakes, particularly in the first six months to one year and we understand that. These will not necessarily lead immediately to civil penalties. Any sign of dishonesty will be treated with the utmost severity."

If individuals want to secure their pension rights, the Occupational Pensions Advisory Service (Opas) and the Pensions Ombudsman will remain, after the trustees, their second port of call.

This expensive new layer of protection will be paid for by a levy of members so the pension scheme will have to foot the bill. From April 1997 levies will be significantly larger and payable annually rather than once every three years.

Andrew Scrimshaw, pensions research manager, Sedgwick

Noble Lowndes, says that from 1997 there will be a general levy and a compensation levy (largely post-event) to pay for Opra and the compensation board.

Personal pensions will be exempt from the compensation levy and pay a smaller general levy because they are not covered by Opra. The Government anticipates that the general levy will bring in £12m a year. Mr Scrimshaw warns that levies could be expected to increase at least sevenfold and even more for pension schemes with a high percentage of pensioners. If it helps avoid another Maxwell scandal, that may be a cheap price to pay.

A free booklet "Spotlight on Opra" and a fact sheet "A problem with your company pension scheme?" are available from the Opra Helpline, phone 01273 627600. Public Concern at Work, phone 0171 404 6609.

Stephanie Hawthorne is the editor of Pensions World



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Parents often find themselves spending more on their children's fees than on their mortgages - so why don't they save?



Paying for class

Education has been one of the most contentious topics of this election, with the Conservatives promising to encourage further growth in the development of privately funded schools, a policy bitterly opposed by both Labour and the Liberal Democrats.

Despite the Tories' defeat on Thursday, the desire of many parents for their children to get the very best education means that private schooling will survive and may even prosper despite Labour's opposition.

Ironically, parents of children at private schools have one thing in common with their state school counterparts: they rarely plan for school fees. Statistics from the School Fees Trust show only 14 per cent of the former make any kind of advance provision for fees. The other 86 per cent pay from their income, not savings.

That can be a crippling expense. The average school fee for private day schools is around £2,000 a term - or more than £6,000 a year per child. Even for a four-year-old, fees are at least £300 a term. To fund a full private education from five to 18, some estimates are well over £100,000.

Parents willing to bear that cost also face the daunting spectre of fees escalating not just with inflation but also with their child's age. To be safe, school fee experts usually assume a rise of at least 5.5 per cent a year.

In many cases parents find themselves spending more on school fees than on their mortgage. So why do so few save for education? According to School Fees Trust managing director Angus Cater, bad salesmen are at least part of the reason.

"The biggest problem is that parents get frightened to death by insurance salesmen telling them it will cost £130,000 and they must pay £240 a month as soon as their child is born. School fee planning is appallingly badly sold."

Andrew Verity on funding the soaring costs of education

Because of the lack of planning for fees, insurance companies tend to aim their fee-planning services at parents who find they cannot keep up payments. The School Fees Partnership, for example, markets advice to parents and schools on how to tap into the equity in their homes. Here, parents can arrange "draw-down facilities" that capitalise the remaining equity in their house by re-mortgaging at discounted rates with their original lender.

The School Fees Insurance Agency, a specialist broker, offers loans based on an endowment savings vehicle - allowing parents to draw as fees fall due. But parents who feel able to save before their child begins school can benefit from an increasingly competitive market in tax-exempt savings vehicles.

Here, it is important to steer clear of most so-called "educational trusts". Two years ago, the Inland Revenue objected to the use of tax exemptions, meant for charitable trusts, to fund private education. Several investment companies, such as Save & Prosper, were forced to suspend sales of this type of plan.

More in favour of school fee planning specialists are personal equity plans (or PEPs). These offer the chance, from a minimum of £50 a month or a £1,000 lump sum, to gain access to tax-exempt growth in the stock market.

However, most PEPs aimed at school fee planning are directed at savers prepared to tie up their money for the medium to long term. Cash them in or draw funds within the first two or three years and your investment may give a poor return.

Parents must also decide how many risks they are prepared to take with the investments within their PEP. There is one established method of minimising risk but getting better-than-average returns on a school-fee investment.

Within a PEP, school fee specialists often recommend investing in a split-capital investment trust. These have the advantage that they will wind up at a fixed date - just right for school fees which will become payable at a predictable time.

Investors can buy zero-dividend preference shares in the trust. While you will not benefit from dividends paid on the shares which the trust buys, the trade-off is that the trust pledges to give a return of, say, 7.5 per cent a year when the trust winds up - much higher than saving with a building society. It is a safer bet than other equity investments because you get priority if the trust ends up growing by less than expected.

The School Fees Insurance Agency offers PEPs specially designed for fee-planning, which include a payment diary system to make sure the right fees are paid at the right time. Built-in life assurance cover and cover for disabling illness can help make sure that your child never has to attend that nasty local state school, unless it means going to the same one as the kids of Labour Cabinet members.

School Fees Insurance Agency 01628 502020; School Fees Partnership 0171 240 5656; School Fees Trust Scheme 0171 351 5335



John Whiting

All employees need to be paid. Just as surely, the taxman will want a share. Life is simple for all three parties - employer, employee and tax gatherer - if pay is all in cash. But what happens if benefits are given?

In the UK arguably benefits as a way of pay took off under the 1970s Labour government when income tax rates climbed. Values used to tax the benefit were often low. Need a new suit? Let the employer provide it and get taxed at the (low) second-hand value. Tax rules, and rates, have changed since then. So what is still tax-efficient? Could we see a resurgence in benefits-in-kind if tax rates change?

Tax is now usually levied on the basis of the cost to the employer. For some things, there are set rates, a "scale charge", to stop and save administrative effort.

In many ways benefits are still ingrained in the UK employment system. It takes a long time for what are almost habits, such as providing a company car, to die away; at the same time a number of benefits such as medical insurance are seen as part of a caring employer's policy. In any case, giving a benefit that costs the employee 40p in the pound, rather than pound for pound if bought directly, still looks attractive.

Let's start with the familiar ground of the car. If the employer provides, there is a charge based on 35 per cent of the list price of the car when new. This reduces if the car is over four years old and, importantly, if a good number of business miles are done in the car.

This car tax charge can be quite high, particularly if you do little business travel. Increasingly employers are winding down car schemes or at least giving employees a cash option: a salary increase rather than a car.

There is a flat rate benefit (typically £1,010 for a medium-sized car) if the employer gives free fuel. The car fuel charge can be good value if you do a lot of private mileage on your free petrol, but bad news if all you got was a single private fill-up as the full benefit charge bites for a single drop of private petrol.

Oddly, a free car parking space (valuable in a big city)

Suits, yachts and other benefits that may be caught in the taxation net

is not taxed, though Labour has suggested it should be. Private medical insurance is a regular benefit in the UK and is an example of something taxed on the cost to the provider. That route is followed for interest-free (or low-interest) loans as well though the taxman lays down "official" rates of interest to measure the cost by. But here there can be good value for a loan of under £5,000 - no tax on that, which covers most season ticket loans.

Moving during the job can be a regular occurrence. If you are relocated, the tax man regards the moving expenses paid for by the employer as tax-free. That might even include a new set of curtains. But if the move costs over £8,000 the excess is taxable.

Having moved, you might be lucky enough to be provided with a house. A tax charge would arise on the rental paid if the employer leases it. If the employer buys the house, a cheaper (cost under £75,000) property is charged on its rateable value. More expensive property is additionally taxed as if the employee is getting an interest-free loan of the value about £75,000. The result can make some properties expensive in tax terms, though there are exemptions where occupying the accommodation is necessary for the job.

And what about the suit I mentioned earlier? For those who thought it was a joke - no, such things really happened. Nowadays it's less tax-efficient. A company-provided asset attracts an annual tax charge based on 20 per cent of the cost.

If the asset is transferred to you, that means tax on the cost, less anything you have already been assessed on. That might seem fair enough for the suit, though put a corporate logo on it and it may well rank as a uniform and be tax-free. But if you are offered the chance of a weekend's use of the company yacht, think twice. That could mean a tax charge based on 20 per cent of the cost of the yacht. The Inland Revenue may allow an apportionment of this charge across all users but it could still be a very expensive weekend.

John Whiting is tax partner at Price Waterhouse

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TO FIND OUT WHAT'S ON TV, WHERE TO GO AND WHEN, READ TODAY'S eye

Serena Mackesy
In my week

If we ever went to war with the States, all we'd have to do to spot their spies would be to get everyone to read out the word 'Leominster'

Tower Hill tube station. Not a place to go if you've a heavy load because tourists have a peculiar talent for stopping in large, tight-knit knots wherever there's a bottleneck. Getting through the gates is an ordeal in itself, dodging the flail of Nikes as another group of blue-rinses gaps at the technological demands of putting a ticket in a slot.

My duffel bag of press releases, my urban rucksack of communications equipment and my six Tesco carrier bags of foodie junk take five minutes to get from caramel peanut seller to District Line platform. It supersedes with bum-bags, Crumple trousers and pocket

along the platform, jump onto my train, see that the arrow on the NEXT TRAIN OUT sign is pointing to the other side, jump off again. The carriage gradually fills with other Tube botes.

"Excuse me," I look up. Two men loom over me: sandy moustaches, fringe-cut fair hair, belted Mackintoshes. I assume they're gay, then remember that just because some gay men affect the preppy look doesn't mean that all preppies are gay. "Mmm?" "Does this train go to Glau-sesster Road?" I nod. "Thank you," he says. I remember the arrow. "It's not the first one out, though." "Oh," he says, "How come all these people are waiting, then? Are

hormone imbalance are etched into his cheeks. "Mwaah mwaah," he says. "Gaad," says moustache. "Wad kinda country is this anyway? These people don't even know when their trains run."

I think about pointing out that if he wants a London Underground employee he should find someone in uniform. My cheeks are burning. A train pulls in on the other platform. The doors open and the sardines of rush-hour tumble out. My companions look at each other, then at me, as though I am playing a prank on them. The train moves off. The arrow still points away.

"When she say it was leaving?" says friend. "I couldn't understand her," says moustache. "She just went 'mwaah mwaah'."

"Why don't you ask her again?" "Don't be stupid!" There is no point asking the English anything. They never know.

Excuse me matey, I think, but still don't say because I'm too well trained. I'm probably less Eng-

lish than you are. I've got an English great-grandmother, but the rest is pure Celt. Friend leans toward me, shouts down the train. "Say," he says, "When we gonna be moving?" "I don't know, I'm sorry." They look at each other, burst out laughing and go "mwaah mwaah" a few more times.

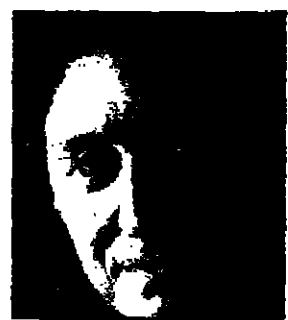
A Circle line train arrives on the other side, empties, pulls out. The arrow flicks towards me. The gits have started in on our train system and how stupid we are not to have razed our medieval street plan to make grids like New York has. Then they start going "mwaah" again, purpling with their own wit.

Sod this, I think. I look up the carriage, attract their attention. "Excuse me. The next train's going from the other platform too." They leap up and sprint from the carriage. A couple of seconds later, the doors slide shut. I smile sweetly and wave as we pull out of the station.

Are they receiving us?

RP (Received Pronunciation) has been mocked almost as long as I can remember. How Now Brown Cow; Around the Rugged Rocks the Ragged Rascal Ran; a round "O" in involved; announcers putting on dinner-jackets to read the news - what a hoot! Middle-class triumphalism, South-East England's way of keeping the provinces in their place: if you want to rise in the world, learn to speak like us. When Harold Wilson, the Beatles and Coronation Street combined forces to knock RP off its pedestal, we all cheered like mad.

Last Saturday's edition of Between the Ears (Radio 3) promised a "radiophonic voyage" through the history of the BBC voice, so I tuned in with interest: would they have anything new to say on the subject of RP, or would it be the same old stuff? It became immediately apparent that this programme would not stoop to anything so banal as a "view": as the sound effects piled up, and a procession of unidentified voices mused on RP's

Michael Church
the week on radio

pros and cons, we were clearly in the sacred preserve of Art. But the ambient sound - a sepulchral voice reading a mantra-like list of "correct" pronunciations - did imply a message that no one could mistake: this way of speaking is ridiculous.

An actress recalled the dreadful moment when she was packed off - aged eight - to have her regional speech-patterns erased by elocution lessons. A BBC radio veteran spoke of the way his ambitious father linguistically reinforced himself, and of his own deci-

sion, at 14, to change his voice and thereby rise in the world. He was full of self-mockery about it, but the process had worked a treat: his voice - currently the voice-over for the Orange TV ads - has literally been his fortune. In impeccable tones, George Bernard Shaw dismissed impeccable RP as a "pedantic affectation". The Brown Cow and the Ragged Rascal got their ritual drubbing. Radio 3's erstwhile anchorwoman Patricia Hughes sadly declared - in that familiar firm mezzo - that she had "a voice which nobody now wants, a twilight voice". And no one gainsaid her.

To be fair, the case for RP was intermittently put. A theatre voice-coach admired the precision and unshiftable pace of the BBC's announcement of the death of George V, and pointed out that its composure did imply emotion below the surface. Peter Porter - an Australian - condemned the inverted snobbery of those who disliked educated Oxford English. But the general drift was critical: RP was a thing of the past, to be affectionately

derided along with that old-fashioned BBC requirement that announcers should be able to handle French, Italian, and German. (At which point one was reminded of the wails that went up from British applicants for EU jobs last year, when the exam required knowledge beyond their insular ken.)

Not once in the programme was it pointed out that RP is the idiom most comprehensible to those for whom English is not a mother tongue. This is why you don't often hear broad Glaswegian accents in programmes emanating from Bush House, and why the film of *Trainspotting* had to be redubbed for the American market. It has nothing to do with snobbery, or with shoring up the British class system: it has to do with communication pure and simple. Patricia Hughes is not a "twilight voice": hers is the voice in which the World Service addresses - and will continue to address - its 40 million English-language listeners. She should take heart, because this is the voice of the future.

Going, going, gong

If there were an award for the best award show, this year's British Academy Awards (BBC1, Tues) would have not a far's chance in a hurricane of winning it. Award shows are nothing if not theatrical in design, and the ones that hold your attention are faithful to that premise. Our host Lennox Henry was telling jokes against the Royal Albert Hall against two awards in. You were reminded of a scene of carnage from the First World War (or another one this week): every time the scripted jokes, the foot soldiers of the evening's entertainment, went over the top, they were promptly gunned down in a hail of apathy. Boffins from one of the BBC's abundance of number-crunching departments have been seconded to calculate the precise amount of gag-writing man-hours wasted. As joke after joke died and went to the heaven of the Albert Hall's cavernous vault, there was something comfortingly British about the mood down on the floor: this was a celebration of the way that Dunkirk was a celebration of British yachtsmanship.

Because they hand out gongs to both big and small-screen folk at the same event, the BAs have always suffered from schizophrenia. A cure is at hand, as next year they will be separated into two ceremonies, creating yet another sprawling award show for television to accommodate. "All being well," advised the Princess Royal, "the ITV network will broadcast them next year." She didn't say who it would all be well for: the BBC, presumably, if the twin shows are as bad as this one.

All in all, it was a joyless night for ITV which, *Hillsborough* apart, was poorly represented in the drama categories, its traditional strongholds. The network spewed out two more dramas this week, but you can't see either of them troubling the judges in a year's time. Touching Evil (ITV, Tues) - no relation to Orson Welles's *Touch of Evil* - is from the pen of Paul Arnott. His pedigree is unimpeachable (writer on *Corona-*

Jasper Rees
the week on television

tion Street, producer on the second series of *Cracker*, writer on the third) but he may have pushed his luck by setting a detective series in St Albans. There were obvious reasons for locating here. Availability, for one: apart from Coventry, it's the only cathedral city in Britain without its own resident television detective. But more persuasive reasons for giving it a wide berth. It's sinfully dull, for starters. And notably lacking in civic personality. To get some colour into the first episode the script had to send itself to Stuttgart. Stuttgart!

Arnott is writing for the recipe book here. Concoct a history of psychological damage for your lead character, upend a packet of feisty female sidekick (Nicola Walker, really annoying), ladle in a stock cube of interdepartmental squabbling, and serve with a far-fetched plot about a villain played by a fruit-vowelled thesp (in this case, Ian McDiarmid). Consistent with the ITV Network Centre's policy of letting hot scriptwriters boil over with an excess of commissions, Arnott also wrote *Reckless*, and has inherited Robson Green in the leading role. Green's characters are running out of new places in the northeast to come from. In *Reckless*, he hailed from Sunderland. This time he's

from Durham. Not long now till the only Northumbrian option left is to play a Dominican sleuth from the Holy Island of Lindisfarne.

And then there's *Bodyguards* (ITV, Thurs), in which our hero is issued with a history of psychological damage, his female sidekick is feisty and - hello, what's this? - another side-order of interdepartmental squabbling. Sean Pertwee, who plays one of the eponymous ex-bodyguards, rejoices, like Robson Green, in a blonde wife of no dramatic significance whatsoever. She's so unimportant that, in *part one*, Bosnian Muslim terrorists are allowed to take her hostage and kill her. The far-fetched plot involved a villain played by a fruit-vowelled thesp (in this case, Anton Lesser).

Shamoo (BBC2, Wed), a film for *Modern Times*, argued that most people go to the hairdresser to have not only their hair done but their head seen to as well. It degenerated quite rapidly into the audio version of the letters pages in the top-sheet press. But sadly not the video version. In one of Baffa's mile-wide categories (see this year's Remembrance Sunday vs Monday Night Football Monday), it may find itself up for an award against the BBC's coverage of the State Opening of Parliament.

James Aufenast



Whatever happened to? Wall's Ice Cream

In the long hot summer of 1976 every corner shop is an oasis of bright yellow Wall's ice-cream, while *Tomel* or the more worryingly named Mr Softie ice-cream vans tinkle and meander their way through hot suburban streets, dispensing a white, spiralling mixture in a cone. In November, Roy Hattersley, Prices and Consumer Protection Minister, pronounces Wall's frozen foods a monopoly, though a "fair" one. Then along comes 1989 and the new ice

age. Häagen-Dazs, a New York-based specialist manufacturer using a soft scoop but a hard sell, brings sexy advertising to change the cosy, fluffy ice-cream industry for ever. Compare the ingredients - fresh cream, egg yolk, fresh skimmed milk, sugar, crushed vanilla beans from Madagascar - with Wall's Blue Ribbon Vanilla Soft Scoop: skimmed milk, dextrose, sugar, vegetable fat, whey solids, glucose syrup, emulsifier E471, stabilisers

(sodium alginate, carob gum, guar gum), natural colours (curcumin, annatto), flavouring. Häagen-Dazs starts to win the cold war, gaining 8 per cent - from nothing - of the market in 1989.

Wall's fights back with its Twister lolly, a strawberry and vanilla ice-cream made using "rotating extrusion nozzle technology". But they've got the wrong end of the stick: in their new factory in Gloucester, with 32,000 litres an hour, they're pro-

ducing quantity rather than quality. Times have changed. "With totally natural colours it is harder to create eye appeal," claims their general development manager. But there's also taste appeal...

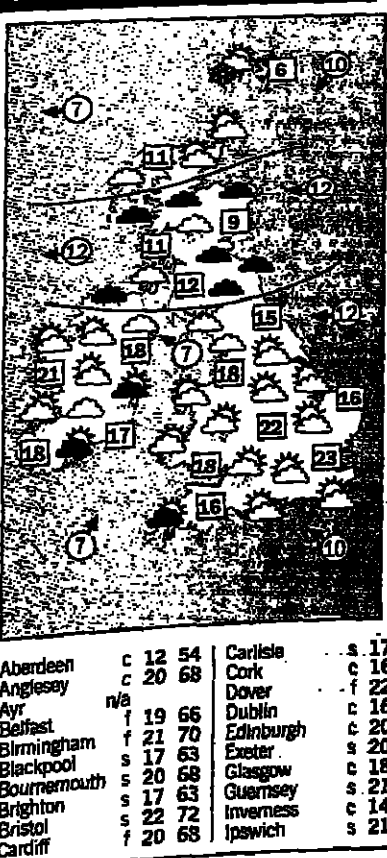
Profits for Unilever, the multinational owner of Wall's, plunge for the third quarter of 1992. Then in May 1994 another American brand pokes its icy toe into the British market. Ben & Jerry's, a tiny company founded from a renovated petrol sta-

tion in Burlington, Vermont, launches its eco-conscious Rainforest Crunch to win the once-hippy, baby-boomer vote.

Unilever licks its wounds. Profits fall by £64m for 1995, the hottest summer on record, although the UK ice-cream market has risen by 62 per cent in the Nineties. You can still get Wall's vanilla ice-cream. But Unilever's Vaseline is probably a tastier product to market.

James Aufenast

WEATHER



The British Isles

General Situation and 5-Day Outlook:

Much of Scotland will stay cloudy with light rain at times while the wind picks up from the east. The far north and the Northern Isles will get some sunshine, but also one or two wintry showers and a cool breeze. Northern Ireland will be mostly dry and bright, but with showers to come while the wind freshens from the east. Much of England and Wales will get some warm sunshine, but with showers breaking out to the north and west.

Sunday will be showery, with some heavy showers, and also longer spells of rain to the north. However, the far north of Scotland should stay dry with some sunshine. More unsettled weather can then be expected through Monday with heavy thundery showers or spells of rain and only a little sunshine. In fact, it is going to stay unsettled through Tuesday and Wednesday with plenty more showers, many of them heavy. Also, it will be cooling down.

Europe and The World

WORLD WEATHER YESTERDAY, MIDDAY (GMT):

Athens	c 16 61	Florence	f 24 75	Munich	c 16 61
Auckland	c 19 66	Frankfurt	f 20 68	New York	c 21 70
B. Aires	c 26 79	Geneva	f 18 64	Nice	c 20 68
Bangkok	th 33 91	Gibraltar	c 20 68	Nicosia	r 18 64
Barcelona	f 21 70	Helsinki	f 4 39	Paris	c 22 72
Beirut	s 23 73	Hong Kong	c 29 84	Prague	c 18 64
Belgrade	c 19 66	Istanbul	n/a	Reykjavik	c 7 45
Berlin	c 18 66	Jerusalem	s 26 79	Rio de Jan	c 27 81
Bombay	s 34 93	K. Lumpur	c 34 93	Riyadh	c 31 88
Brussels	f 18 64	London	c 21 70	Rome	f 22 72
Budapest	f 18 64	Madrid	c 21 70	Stockholm	c 16 61
Cairo	s 35 95	Manila	c 30 84	Sydney	f 20 68
Cape Town	c 20 68	Los Angeles	n/a	Tenerife	c 22 72
Casablanca	c 22 72	Malaga	c 24 75	Tokyo	c 20 68
Christchurch	c 12 54	Malta	f 20 68	Venice	c 20 68
Copenhagen	c 19 66	Melbourne	c 22 72	Vienna	f 18 64
Corfu	c 20 68	Montreal	c 18 64	Warsaw	c 15 59
Darwin	c 33 91	Moscow	c 7 45	Washington	c 24 75
Dhahran	s 35 95			Wellington	c 14 57

AA Roadwatch

Sussex, M25 J8-10. Various restrictions and lane closures both ways between Reigate and the A3 as major widening work continues.

Bristol, M5 J18-19. Contraflow in operation across the Avonmouth Bridge with a 50mph speed limit. Regular rush hour delays.

Suffolkshire, A50 Stoke-on-Trent. Major construction work at Mel. Long peak-time delays.

West Yorkshire, M1 J47. Major long-term roadworks continue around the Leeds junction with lane and speed restrictions. Expect delays on the M1, M62 and Doncaster Road.

Edinburgh, M9 Newbridge Spur. Major roadworks at Newbridge Roundabout (M8 J2). Expect delays.

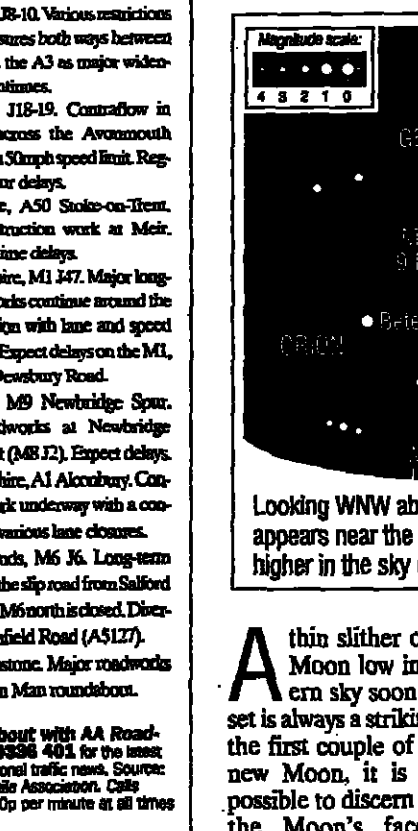
Cambridgeshire, A1 Alconbury. Construction work underway with a contraflow and various lane closures.

West Midlands, M6 J6. Long-term roadworks - the slip road from Salford Circus to the M6 north is closed. Diversions by Lichfield Road (A5127).

A11, Leytonstone. Major roadworks on the Green Man roundabout.

Out and about with AA Roadwatch call 0800 404 404 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per minute at all times (inc VAT).

The Sky at Night



Sun and Moon

Sun rises 5:29am
Sun sets 8:27pm

Moon rises 4:02am
Moon sets 4:13pm

New moon: May 6

Lighting-up Times

Today	Tomorrow
London 8:27pm to 5:27am	London 8:28pm to 5:27am
Bristol 8:27pm to 5:31am	Bristol 8:28pm to 5:31am
Birmingham 8:27pm to 5:31am	Birmingham 8:28pm to 5:31am
Manchester 8:42pm to 5:29am	Manchester 8:43pm to 5:29am
Newcastle 8:46pm to 5:29am	Newcastle 8:47pm to 5:29am
Glasgow 9:00pm to 5:27am	Glasgow 9:01pm to 5:27am
Belfast 9:01pm to 5:30am	Belfast 9:02pm to 5:30am

Yesterday's Readings

London	NO ₂	O ₃
London	Moderate	Moderate
S. England	Good	Moderate
Wales	Good	Moderate
C. England	Good	Poor
N. England	Good	Moderate
Scotland	Good	Moderate
N. Ireland	Good	Good

Air Quality

London	NO ₂	O ₃
London	Moderate	Moderate
S. England	Good	Moderate
Wales	Good	Moderate
C. England	Good	Moderate
N. England	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
N. Ireland	Good	Good

High Tides

London	AM HT	PM HT
London	11:41 6.8	
Liverpool	8:57 8.6	21:36 8.7
Am. (Albert Dock)	4:40 11.7	17:15 11.9
Hull (Albert Dock)	4:08 7.8	16:15 8.0
Greenwich	10:16 3.1	22:42 3.0
Dun Laoghaire	9:27 4.0	22:12 3.9

Moon low in the west

Moon low in the west - moon soon after sunset is always a striking sight. In the first couple of days after new Moon, it is often just possible to discern the rest of the Moon's face, faintly revealed by Earthshine, as well as the bright crescent. Were you on the Moon, you would clearly see why. The full Earth, shining brilliantly with reflected sunlight in your night sky, would be flooding the grey lunar surface with a

Jaqueline Mitton

In the long ago days when 29, was outpointed by Nigel

In the long ago days when 29, was outpointed by Nigel

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. This involves gathering information and understanding the context of the problem.

Merit, last year's six-length win- who took third place behind Top

1. The first part of the document is a list of references. The references are listed in a standard format, with the author's name, the title of the work, and the publisher. The references are as follows:

1. J. H. Van Veen, *The History of the Netherlands*, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578,

Bradford have the hunger


Referee: S. Cummins (Widnes)

Substitutes (from): Haugh, Pickavance
Matzura, Northey, McVey.

Not on: 2.A5 (BBC1)

Kick that failed to make a splash: Don Fox steers the ball wide of the sticks in the final minutes of the 1968 final. 'Poor lad,' said Eddie Warner

be moved to London - although



Syd Hynes is the first man to be sent off at Wembley

Leeds were the hottest of favourites to win this final, but were already on the way to defeat by homespun Leigh when



The then Bradford coach Brian Smith, mounted a spirited defence of Graham: "All

Smith declared that he still had full confidence in Graham – and three weeks later bought a new full-back, Stuart Spruce from Widnes.

INTERMEDIATE KNOCK-OUT CUP Final: Do-caster v Thamez Wanderers (at Twickenham).
JUNIOR KNOCK-OUT CUP Final: Grewe Harwich v Harpenden (1,0) (at Twickenham).

Basketball
BUDWEIGER CHAMPIONSHIP Semi-final
Chesler Jets v Playboy TV Leopards (8.45);
Idle London Towers v Sheffield Sharks (8.45)
Wembley Arena.

Speedway
7.30 unless stated

EUTE LEAGUE: Bradford v King's Lynn; Ebbw Vale v Coventry; Swindon v Wolverhampton.
PREMIER LEAGUE Knock-out Cup: Barnsley v Sheffield (7.0); Stoke v Hull.
AMATEUR LEAGUE: Barnwick v Middlesbrough (6.0).

Other sports

BOXING: IBF and WBO featherweight title: Harold (Sheffield, holder) v B Henry (Sunderland).
WBC super-middleweight title: R Field (Runcorn) v J...

GOLF: Lytham Trophy (Royal Lytham). Bertie Troph (The Belfrage).

MOTORCYCLING: World Superbike Championships (Donington Park).

Dwyer's selection gamble has produced more than the odd grumble in recent weeks - certainly, the Leicester faithful

midweek against Bedford, Bristol considered giving both men an additional few days to recover from injury before opting to squeeze every last ounce of value from their high-profile transfer targets.

TOMORROW
Football
FA HARP NATIONAL LEAGUE OF IRELAND Senior Challenge Cup Final: Derry City v Shelbourne.
UK LIVING FA WOMEN'S CUP Final: Millwall

Hockey
COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP A Division Semi-final: Sussex v Surrey (10.0); Cheshire v Lancashire (12.0). Final (4.15) at Milton Keynes National Stadium.
UNDER-21 COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP Final (2.15) at Milton Keynes National Stadium.
RAF CAREERS YOUTH CUP Under-14s Westwood University (10.0-4.15). Under-20s: Bedford

Basketball
BUDWEISER CHAMPIONSHIP Final (Wembley Arena, 8.45).
NBL MEN'S FIRST DIVISION Championship Final: Plymouth v Ware (4.0)
NBL WOMEN'S FIRST DIVISION Championship Final: Sheffield v Thames Valley (2.0)

Speedway
7.30 unless stated
PREMIER LEAGUE: Knock-out Cup: Gillingham v Newcastle (8.30).
PREMIER LEAGUE: Newport v Exeter (2.30).
AMATEUR LEAGUE: Buxton v Belle Vue (3.0).
Letham v Millershill (2.30).

GOLF: Lytham Trophy (Royal Lytham). Bertha Trophy (The Bertha).

MOTORCYCLING: World Superbike. Grand Prix (Donington Park).

SMOKE: Embassy. World Championship (Sheffield).

TABLE TENNIS: World Championship (Manchester).

TENNIS: Men's satellite event (Hartfield).

—

Probable teams		
Stuart Spruce	Full-back	Steve Prescott
Darren Pascoe	Winger	Danny Arnold
Gernae Bradley	Centre	Alan Huxford
Paul Loughlin	Centre	Paul Newson
Paul Cook	Winger	Anthony Sullivan
Robbie Paul	Stand-off	Tommy Martyn
Glen Tomlinson	Scrum-half	Bobbie Goulding
Brian McDermott	Prop	Apolo Perrelli
James Lowes	Hooker	Kieran Cunningham
Bernard Dwyer	Prop	Julian O'Neill
Sonny Nicolle	Second row	Chris Joyce
Simon Knox	Second row	Chris Rowe
Steve McNamara	Loose forward	Karl Hammond
Substitutes: Ekoku, Calford, Meffley, Refuwa.	Substitutes (try): Hogg, Piacentone, Metzana, Thornby, McVie.	
Referee: S Cummings (Widnes).	Kick-off: 2.45 (B&L)	

Leake never scored a try, kicked a goal in the Challenge Cup, but he played a part in the history of the game that has now been fully acknowledged.

Leake was the secretary of the Welsh Commission, a shadow organisation with a brief to convert the Principality to the 12 a-side code, either by co-opting existing union clubs or establishing new ones to play league.

It was he who put forward the suggestion that the final should be moved to London – although

■ It definitely put me off. He has got an intimidating face. You wonder if at any minute he's going to jump out and lay one on you. **Desmon Williams** was the off-pudding presence of the team. He was a friend, his brother-in-law, friend, his nephew. **Nancy Harris**, in the press seats during Morgan's defeat to Hendry in the snooker World Championship.

■ You concentrate on what you are doing, whether it's Naz or a football club there. **Hendry**.

■ It was no reason to grovel. He was the one who was the troublemaker. **Will Carling** announced his retirement from international rugby.

■ When you get out of the car there is not much celebrating going on. Just a sense of relief that it's over. **Desmon Williams** and now of **Andrew** on driving for a smaller team.

■ Sometimes you do something in training and you wonder if you might get one on in a match. **Glenis Hoddle**, England manager, on his side's first goal in the win over **Georgia**.

■ There have been different officers, different managers and different assistants, most of them. It would be difficult to find a factory to be run like that. **Never mind a football club. We can't kid ourselves.** It will take a minute to stay up now. **Dave Saunders**, of Nottingham Forest, on his side's plight.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

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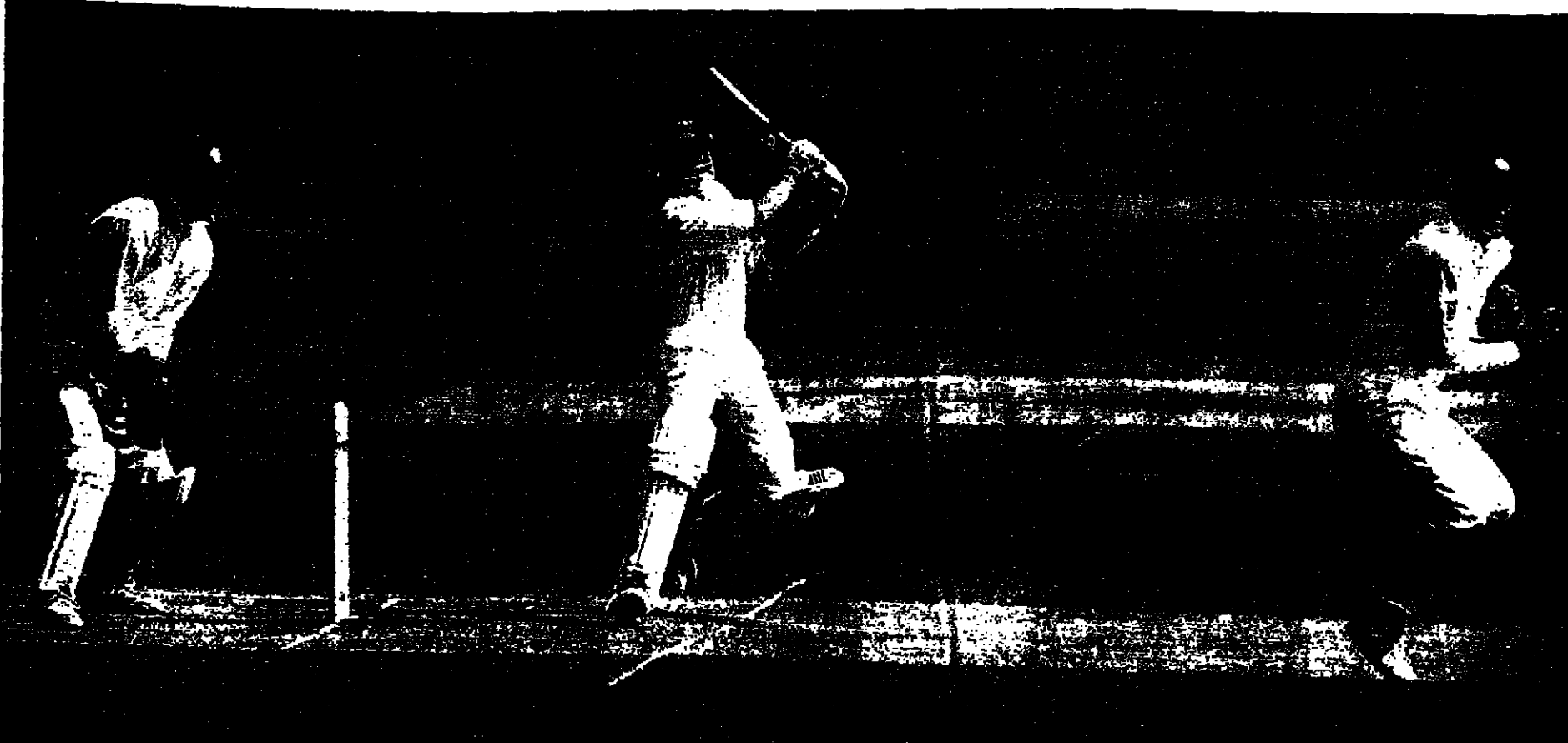
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هكذا من الراحل

CRICKET: Both Yorkshire and Lancashire leave it late while Universities succumb at The Oval



Northamptonshire's Rob Bailey takes evasive action as Tim Robinson goes on the attack for Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge yesterday

Photograph: Tony Marshall/Empics

Austin remains cool in crisis

DEREK PRINGLE

reports from Edgbaston
Lancashire 208
Warwickshire 208
Lancashire win because they lost fewer wickets

The Tories may have been wiped out, but Lancashire, for the moment at least, were clearly out to prove that not all dynasties have had their day. Having lost their two previous matches, the dozens of one-day cricket and the Benson and Hedges Cup holders were in danger of relinquishing their title without even entering the knock-out stage.

It may still happen, but after beating Warwickshire by losing fewer wickets in a thrilling last-ball finish with the kind of

team performance the Conservative party clearly lacked, they at least have given themselves a chance of further glory.

In a nail-biting game that swung far more unpredictably than the swingometer operated by Peter Snow, Warwickshire fell at the last having been well placed after Allan Donald's 5 for 25, his competition best, kept the Lancashire total to 208.

To that end they owe much to Ian Austin, so often their unsung hero, but the coolest man to bowl at the death. It was his straight as a dyeworker as much as Richard Green's return from deep point to run out Gladstone Small off the final ball that won the game for Lancashire.

Lancashire's approach to one-day cricket is one of opposites: they attack with their gung-ho batting and retrieve un-

promising situations by bowling and fielding tightly. But if the former let them down at Edgbaston, the latter was beautifully delivered with Peter Martin's shining example of the old-fashioned virtues of line and length.

Poor Warwickshire, the ghost of Dermot Reeve still lingers as the performances of Trevor Penney and Graeme Welch both indicate. Having turned the game around, they lost four wickets in their burst, the knock-out blow they possessed under Reeve now seems to elude them. Donald, despite the relentless work-load now heaped upon him by country and county, retains an incredible appetite for bowling. One-day cricket is not his forte, but when he bowls as quickly and as straight as he did yesterday,

even a strong batting line-up like Lancashire's is powerless to respond.

Like yet coiled, he surged in from the Pavilion End after Graeme Welch's ineffective opening burst to settle. By spending last summer playing for Rishston in the Lancashire League, Donald - having identified that he would be bowling a lot of overs - shortened his run.

The change has helped to hone an already lethal action without compromising on pace, a combination Lancashire were to become acutely aware of. But if Jason Gallian was guilty of carelessness as he nonchalantly chipped the fast bowler to cover, John Crawley was scuttled by a rocket two balls later for nought, as he left a yawning gap between bat and pad.

Having returned from England's winter tours with reputation enhanced, Crawley is not having the best of starts to the season, and this was his second duck out of three games in this competition.

His form is not the only concern, however, and with Australia due to arrive in 10 days time, Atherton could have done with some runs as well. Instead, having plodded his way to 24 off 47 balls, he edged a loose drive at Donald to slip.

When Donald rested, Lancashire did manage to prosper. Wasim Akram, the Gold Award winner, with an unbeaten 52 and Ian Austin with 35, both scored valuable runs in unpromising circumstances to ensure that they had something to bowl at. In the event it proved just enough.

Surrey coast to victory

ROUND-UP

John Major, suddenly with more time on his hands, quickly found something to do yesterday. After leaving two London landmarks he crossed the river to pop in the The Oval and saw Surrey comfortably beat the British Universities by six wickets with almost 25 overs to spare.

Despite the loss, the students' Will House won the Gold Award. The batsman, who is on Kent's books, hit one six and 11 fours on his way to an entertaining 93 off 92 balls.

The students' bowling attack undid all that and more inside 10 overs. By then Surrey had reached 97 without loss. Only Durham's Mark Chilton, with 2 for 8 from three overs, managed anything respectable with his medium pace.

Alec Stewart lost his opening partner Alistair Brown at 98, with the England wicketkeeper hitting his second half-century in three Benson and Hedges matches this season. He eventually finished on 86 not out having hit three sixes and 11 fours.

Apart from Brown's 47 Stewart received little help from his team-mates and House had had pretty much the same sort of experience when he was batting. Only his Kent colleague, James Ford, with a sturdy 38 gave him any support in the face of some parsimonious bowling with Chris Lewis the pick, returning figures of 8-5-6-2.

Jack Russell, the England wicketkeeper, has escaped punishment from Lord's for his autobiography *Jack Russell Unleashed*.

Barnett makes full use of his know-how

JON CULLEY

reports from Derby

Derbyshire have their eyes on the Championship after their splendid achievement in finishing second last season but in the meantime, it might be unwise to bet against them repeating their 1993 success in the Benson and Hedges Cup.

Wednesday's victory over Lancashire, the county they beat at Lord's in 1993, put them in a promising position in Group A, the toughest of the qualifying sections, with their last three matches at home. Their coach, Les Stillman, one half of the Australian double act who organised Derbyshire's advance in 1996, is trying to give youth its head in a side captained forcefully by his compatriot, Dean

Jones, but his faith in the quality of the more senior players continues to prove the value of experience.

No Derbyshire servant has more than him Kim Barnett, who will be 37 this summer yet remains invaluable for his match-winning know-how, an ingredient often as vital as raw talent. Barnett's unbeaten 112 at Old Trafford was the cornerstone of a comfortable win against the holders.

Yesterday, he contributed another man of the match performance against Yorkshire, who needed to win to retain a realistic chance of themselves qualifying for the last eight. Having arrested Yorkshire's progress with three wickets, Barnett again provided his side with the substantial batting performance, making 88 as

Derbyshire chased 261 to win under a cloudless sky and midsummer temperatures at the County Ground.

Yorkshire, who felt the pitch was good enough to bat first after winning the toss, might have had 40 or 50 more runs had they not stumbled after a promising start. Martyn Moxon helped his captain, David Blythe, establish a decent momentum before the latter was leg before to a deservingly Phil DeFreitas, who swung the new ball appreciably.

The setback had no detrimental effect on Yorkshire's progress. Moxon and Michael Vaughan now put on 71 in 13 overs, taking advantage of some inconsistent bowling once DeFreitas had taken a rest. Without Dominic Cork (injured) and Devon Malcolm, who was left out, it was not the most

experienced Derbyshire attack. Moxon completed a 61-ball half-century but lost his wicket aiming an inelegant swipe at the leg-spinner, Vince Clarke, recruited during the winter from Leicestershire.

This ushered in Yorkshire's new Australian, Darren Lehmann, at last with some practice under his belt, and at 150 for 2 in the 31st over everything looked set for a total in excess of 300.

However, the loss of three wickets for 20 runs in the next six overs upset matters. Vaughan drove straight into the hands of Glen Roberts, the 23-year-old left-arm spinner, falling just short of 50 for the third time in four days. Then Lehmann, wasting an opportunity to build his confidence, paid for a dreadful stroke by giving Barnett,

bowling gentle medium pace rather than big breaks, the first of his successes.

Peter Hartley was another likely to have been winning over the manner of his dismissal but the arrival of Craig White, a veteran Anthony McGrath, restored Yorkshire's equilibrium and a stand of 69 in 11 overs.

Barnett and Chris Adams opened with 62 in 10 overs as White and Chris Silverwood struggled with their line and an exciting stand of 78 in 17 overs with Gul Khan took Derbyshire to 175 for 3 with 12 overs left but Silverwood's dismissal of Khan with the first ball of his second spell sparked an unexpected hiccup, with three wickets falling in as many overs, including Barnett, who holed out to long-on off the spin of Richard Stamp.

Benson & Hedges Cup

(One-day games)

SOMERSET v IRELAND

TUNTON: Somerset won by 221 runs

SOMERSET

G D Rose c Eagleson b Cronje 24

M Burns b Benson 52

R C Eagleson c Ferguson b McDermott 52

M J Latham b Cronje 8

R J Hansen c Morris b McDermott 37

R J Morris c Morris b McDermott 42

R J Turner b Cronje 42

K A Parsons not out 22

Extras (lb, w, nb, n) 349

Total (for 7, 50 overs) 349

Ireland (for 7, 50 overs) 128

Did not bat: J D Fent, A R Coddick, M. Hughes

Referee: J. D. Fent, A. R. Coddick, M. Hughes

Umpires: J. D. Fent, A. R. Coddick, M. Hughes

Surrey v British Univ

THE POSTERS: Surrey won by six wickets

BRITISH UNIVERSITIES

P P Hodgson c Knight b Lewis 10

E Smith c Lewis b Bicknell 10

M J Cullen c Thorpe b C H Hollis 8

A Smith c Knight b Bicknell 8

J A House c Stanger b Bicknell 38

J A House c Stanger b Bicknell 38

J A House c Stanger b Bicknell 38

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NORTHANTS v NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

TRENT BRIDGE: Northamptonshire won by eight wickets

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

P P Hodgson c Knight b Lewis 10

E Smith c Lewis b Bicknell 10

M J Cullen c Thorpe b C H Hollis 8

A Smith c Knight b Bicknell 8

J A House c Stanger b Bicknell 38

J A House c Stanger b Bicknell 38

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Derbyshire v Yorkshire

COUNTY GROUND: Derbyshire won by 10 runs

DERBYSHIRE

P P Hodgson c Knight b Lewis 10

E Smith c Lewis b Bicknell 10

M J Cullen c Thorpe b C H Hollis 8

A Smith c Knight b Bicknell 8

J A House c Stanger b Bicknell 38

J A House c Stanger b Bicknell 38

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The Blackburn Olympic team of 1883 put their FA Cup victory down to a diet of port, raw eggs, porridge, mutton and oysters

According to a recent survey of the nation's likes and dislikes when Labour was last in power, our favourite dessert 18 years ago was Angel Delight (although Instant Whip ran it a close second). However, the old birds' favourite took on a new meaning in Stockport this week after the striker Brett Angell scored the goal which won his Second Division club promotion, and gave local newspaper headline writers the evening off.

Unsurprisingly, however, Angel Delight has not been a regular on the menu at Edgeley Park during a season in which the players' stamina, as much as their talent, has been sorely tested. In fact, Alan Armstrong believes that diet has played a significant part in ensuring Stockport stayed a course which saw them reach the semi-finals of the Coca-Cola Cup and the Auto Windscreens Shield, as well as win promotion. Angell's lanky striking partner admits he used to eat

"loads of fried food, but this season we got diet sheets and were told to go heavy on carbohydrates and fruit. We have pasta three hours before a game, then fruit, bananas and pineapple before kick-off. It must have made a difference, I'd never normally eat a meal like this."

Hard though it may be to visualise the Stockport lads tucking into exotic pineapple in a sweaty dressing room, the days when the pre-match meal consisted of steak and chips, topped up with a Mars Bar at half-time are long gone.

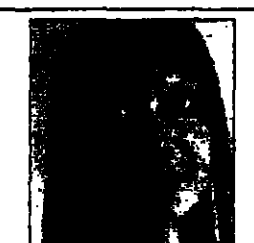
Or are they? At Chesterfield, this season's other Second Division over-achievers, the players often get so hungry in between their pre-match meal and kick-off that they need a Mars Bar to give them an extra boost. "But we don't really bother much about our food," confesses the striker Kevin Davies, whose meal is nothing more complicated than beans on toast. But he does admit that the stop-up meal of chick-

en and potatoes before the FA Cup tie against Middlesbrough made him feel "a lot better, and helped me get through extra time."

While it might not be surprising that most cash-strapped smaller clubs have more to worry about than whether their players are eating fried eggs or fettuccine, it's still incredible that the importance of diet has, until recently, been overlooked when you consider that the average footballer runs around seven miles and makes at least 20 short, fast sprints during a game.

Incredible maybe, surprising maybe not. Just as football has taken almost a century to face up to its responsibilities as a business which should adhere to business principles, so footballers are only just starting to realise that they are athletes, and should treat their bodies accordingly. The right diet can apparently improve a player's game by up to six per cent and provide five minutes of extra energy, and we all know how

Olivia Blair



ON SATURDAY

long it takes to score a goal. Despite that, preaching to the unconverted remains an uphill struggle; so much so that the idea of 'Teddies' Sheringham and Ryan Giggs advertising health food products like Quorn burgers and Surlex cereal is at odds with the traditional image of footballers as having 'plochein' tastes. And despite the increasing number of clubs who employ a

football nutritionist (which must currently rank alongside Conservative politician as the most unenviable profession), most players will still plump for junk food over health food, given the choice. For example, Matt Le Tissier, whose stamina has been a perennial bone of contention, admits to a penchant for burger and chips despite the promptings of Southampton's nutritionist. The words "leopard" and "spots" spring to mind.

Still, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. It's the skills of players like Juninho, Zola and Ravanelli which have illuminated this season; foreign players who find our stodgy British diet a culture shock. The Napoli youngster Gennaro Scarlato went back to Italy after a recent trial at Chelsea blaming his return on "awful food", and that at a club where changing the diet was among Raul Gullit's first priorities when he became manager. "At Milan you were always told what to eat:

pasta and fish," he says. "Here I can't believe what players eat: sausages, bacon, omelettes. They must have stomachs like rocks."

Ditto the Blackburn Olympic team of 1883, who put their FA Cup success down to a diet which consisted largely of port, raw eggs, porridge, mutton and oysters. West Ham's consuming of oysters before their 1947 Cup final proved less successful (they lost 1-0); while today's most famous dietary luminary is Gordon Strachan, who, as we know, puts his longevity down to a "revolutionary" diet of porridge and bananas. "It always used to be soup, steak and chips, tea and toast before a game," recalls Strachan, "and we tucked in because in those days it was the best meal of the week. Gradually players started to eat more fish and carbohydrates; when I took over here I changed everything. Now it's carbohydrates, glucose and water with everything."

Molbys have given way to a more svelte generation of players.

However, no football club has as yet cottoned on to the recuperating powers of... the Jaffa Cake. High in carbohydrate and low in fat, the orange-flavoured cake with the spongy bottom and chocolate coating has replaced oranges as the half-time snack at rugby club Saracens; according to nutritionist Tony Copsey it replaces energy quickly and is easily digested. McVitie's have since changed the cake's image from "student's friend" to "sportsman's friend", perhaps Carling will one day be ousted in favour of the McVitie's Premiership.

But for all the emphasis on the link between food and fitness, it's worth remembering that fat and football can, occasionally, be beautiful. Ferenc Puskas was described by one England player as "that fat little chap" when he came to Wembley with Hungary in 1953. Puskas almost single-handedly destroyed England 6-3.

Blues lose Zola until Cup final

Football
CATHERINE RILEY

Gianfranco Zola is unlikely to play for Chelsea before the FA Cup final in a fortnight, following his request to be taken off after 55 minutes of Italy's World Cup win over Poland in midweek because of his nagging hamstring injury, which he had a scan on yesterday.

Although Rudi Gullit, the Chelsea manager, stressed that this was just a precaution and that the problem is not serious, he has decided to rest Zola until the Wembley meeting with Middlesbrough on 17 May.

Zola's absence is not the only problem for Gullit, who has several other players doubtful for today's Premiership match with Leeds.

Defender Steve Clarke will not be risked with his back problem, while Frank Leboeuf is suspended. However, goalkeeper Kevin Hitchcock is back in the squad and both Roberto Di Matteo and Dan Petrescu are both fit after international duty.

Uefa intends to ease Europe's congested international programme by ordering national teams to play some matches back-to-back. The European governing body's executive committee will consider a system of double-header games to be introduced on a compulsory basis, which means a national team will play two World Cup

or European Championship qualifying games in a 10-day period without the distraction of domestic league games.

The body wants to force domestic leagues to suspend their programmes for certain weekends a year so that 10 national games can be fitted in. Most major leagues already do this on a voluntary basis, but this means that the club v country conflict would be removed.

Ronnie Whelan will learn next week whether he is to stay as manager of relegated Southend. Vic Johnson, the club's chairman, said: "Ronnie's contract contains a clause that in the event of relegation he can be dismissed on a month's notice. But I will sit down and discuss things with him once the season is over."

Matthew Etherington will today become the seventh-youngest player to appear in the Football League when he makes his debut for Peterborough aged 15 years and 158 days.

Wendy Toms will become the first woman to referee the Avon Insurance Combination Cup final when she takes charge of the game between Tottenham and Wimbledon at White Hart Lane on 12 May.

Nwankwo Kanu, Internazionale's 20-year-old Nigerian striker, has been cleared to return to the game following recent heart surgery to repair a deformed aortic valve, a condition which would have proved fatal without an operation.



Virtual golf: Bernard Gallacher plays out of the bunker on the specially constructed Road Hole at the NEC in Birmingham yesterday. Photograph: Peter Jay

Closed shop throws open its doors

Tony Blair is not the first to achieve a landslide victory of late. Tiger Woods had a handy majority at the US Masters in a breathtaking performance which brought new converts to the game. Now, like Blair, golf has to hang on to them.

An attempt was made with the Professional Golfers' Association's National Golf Week last month and now in Hall No 1 of Birmingham's NEC, golf has been making an exhibition of itself. The Golf Show, sponsored by KPMG, runs throughout the Bank Holiday weekend and for the first time brings punters into direct contact with the golf industry.

The PGA say they gave 12,000 lessons to new golfers during the Golf Week, with two-thirds signing up for further instruction. Over four days, the Golf Show hopes to have 30,000 visitors, with 20 per cent new to the game. It is the brainchild of Simon Kimble of Consumer Exhibitions, whose previous credits include the Good Food Show, Tomorrow's World Live and London Fashion Week.

"This is by far the biggest thing we have attempted," Kimble, who has no previous golfing background, said. "I wanted to take golf out of its usual environment. The game has this

image of members' clubs with "private" signs at the gate. The aim was to make it as interactive as possible."

So there is the chance to use a driving range, a putting green, a chipping area as well as test the manufacturers' equipment in their own nets. In addition, Kimble has attracted leading players and celebrities. Colin Montgomerie, Europe's No 1, will be on show and taking questions today, with Ryder Cup captain Seve Ballesteros and Bernhard Langer here on

The first public golf show is on at the NEC. Andy Farrell paid it a visit

Monday. Paul Gascoigne and Chris Evans head the celebrity list for Sunday. Yesterday afternoon, Kimble was still tracking down Nick Faldo, who is in the country.

In a corner of the hall, the 17th green from the Old Course at St Andrews, including the

Road Hole bunker (although not quite as deep as the original) has been constructed by the Peter Allis Design company. Bernard Gallacher, Europe's winning captain at Oak Hill in 1995, was one of the first to be put through his paces and managed to highlight one of the many contradictions that make golf baffling to the beginner.

"Remember, you are not trying to hit the ball, but the sand behind it," Gallacher said of playing bunker shots. How to play from a buried lie became

a requirement when the compere stood on his ball. "Put the ball back in your stance, clubface closed, hands forward," Gallacher, clearly practising hard for the Seniors' tour, put it to two inches.

Next up was Ray Clemence, although he was not allowed into the sand without a comment on England's performance on Wednesday. "There has been a bit of criticism, but you can never please the English press, can you?" said Clemence's assistant, Clemence left his first attempt in the Road Hole bunker. Next time he escaped, the ball making contact with painted backdrop, somewhere around the roof of Russells Hotel.

Clemence, who recalled Bill Shankly banning his team from playing a round of golf 48 hours before a match, also did his bit in the Celebrity Forum. At a pro-am in Brussels last year, he caught his drive on the heel of the club and hit a woman 10 yards away on the shoulder.

"I have never moved so fast in my life, but fortunately she was fine. The next day, instead of the big build-up as former England goalkeeper and the rest, the announcer just said: 'Here's the madman'. The organisers hid behind the advertising boards. Talk about being nervous."

Coughing Koyama pulls out of singles

Table tennis

Breathing difficulties forced Chire Koyama, the former world champion who delights in beating her old team-mates now that she plays for Japan, to withdraw from the opening round of the women's singles at the World Championships in Manchester yesterday.

Koyama, seeded joint fifth, was scheduled to meet the Latvian Olga Kartuzova. "She has not been well for nearly a month. She has been coughing and also has some back trouble," a Japanese official said.

Despite not being fully fit, Koyama, formerly known as He Zhili, won all her seven matches in the team competition in which Japan finished sixth and was considered one of the few challengers to China's grip on the women's title. China have already retained both team trophies in their attempt to repeat the 1995 clean sweep of all seven golds.

Kong Linghui opened the defence of his men's title in convincing fashion against the left-handed Dutchman Jorg de Cock, ranked 277 places below the champion.

It was a match of staccato rallies with both players manoeuvring for the third-ball kill. The 21-year-old Kong coasted to victory 21-13, 21-9, 21-18, and the only time he had to dig deeper into his impressive repertoire of strokes was when he trailed the workmanlike De Cock 7-12 in the third game.

Stich to retire due to injury

Tennis

Michael Stich, the 1991 Wimbledon champion, said yesterday that he would retire from competitive tennis later this year because of a shoulder injury.

The 28-year-old player, No 2 in the world in 1994, said he would play until September, when he hoped to bow out by playing for the German Davis Cup team against Mexico.

Andre Agassi, who won Wimbledon in 1992, was beaten 7-6, 3-6, 6-3 by a 20-year-old Swede, Magnus Norman, in the second round of the ATP Challenge event in Atlanta on Thursday.

The British No 2, Greg Rusedski, has withdrawn from next week's German Open in Hamburg because he does not consider he has fully recovered from his recent wrist injury.

Celtic hit by injuries

Scottish football

Celtic could be without four players, including their keeper Stewart Kerr, who has a dislocated finger, for tomorrow's match at Hibernian. Paul McStay, Enrico Annunzi and Chris Hay are also on the injured list.

This midfielder Chic Charnley and striker Kevin Harper are both ruled out by suspension, while the former Celtic player Pat McGinlay is struggling with an ankle injury.

Now that his team have clinched a UEFA Cup place, the Dundee United manager, Tommy McLean, is expected to call up the talented trio of Craig Easton, Steve Thomson and Paul Walker for today's match against Hearts.

Hearts are likely to be without skipper Gary Locke, who is

still struggling with a hamstring injury. Paul Ritchie is out as he faces a hernia operation.

Bobby Williamson has been named Bell's Manager of the Month for the second successive time after leading Kilmarnock to the Scottish Cup Final.

The man in charge at Rugby Park picked up the April award and, to complete a double, the club's striker Paul Wright has been named player of the month. Kilmarnock are aiming to stretch their unbeaten run to nine games and banish any thoughts of relegation when they travel to Dunfermline today.

They will face Falkirk in the Cup final at Broom on 24 May and their First Division opponents have also been rewarded for overcoming Celtic in the semi-final with their manager, Alex Totten, winning the divisional award.

Football

THURSDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Nationwide Football League Second Division: Bradford City 1, Charlton 0. 6th Division: Carlisle United 1, Walsley 0. 7th Division: Walsley 0, Walsley 0. 8th Division: Walsley 0, Walsley 0.

Cricket

Ashtley Harvey Walker, the former Derbyshire player, was found shot dead at a private club in the Berra neighborhood of Johannesburg on Monday. A police spokesman said they were baffled by the death of the 56-year-old cricket consultant and have excluded robbery as a motive. Walker, who became the first Derbyshire player to score a debut century, played more than seven years for the county before moving to South Africa in the early 1970s.

Drugs in sport

The South African lock John Ackenmann and two provincial players have been banned for two years after testing positive for performance-enhancing drugs. A South African Rugby Union disciplinary commission found Ackenmann and Gauteng Lions players Benjie Nortje and Stefan Brinkhorst had used the anabolic steroid nandrolone.

Equestrianism

PIRELLA GOSSETT WORLD CUP FINAL (Dressage): Sweden, 2-5; Ireland, 2-5; Germany, 2-5; France, 2-5; Netherlands, 2-5; Spain, 2-5; Italy, 2-5; Belgium, 2-5; Austria, 2-5; Switzerland, 2-5; Czech Republic, 2-5; Slovakia, 2-5; Hungary, 2-5; Poland, 2-5; Slovenia, 2-5; Croatia, 2-5; Serbia, 2-5; Montenegro, 2-5; Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2-5; Macedonia, 2-5; Bulgaria, 2-5; Romania, 2-5; Greece, 2-5; Turkey, 2-5; Cyprus, 2-5; Malta, 2-5; San Marino, 2-5; Monaco, 2-5; Andorra, 2-5; Liechtenstein, 2-5; Luxembourg, 2-5; Netherlands Antilles, 2-5; Aruba, 2-5; Barbados, 2-5; Belize, 2-5; Bermuda, 2-5; Bolivia, 2-5; Brazil, 2-5; Canada, 2-5; Chile, 2-5; Colombia, 2-5; Costa Rica, 2-5; Cuba, 2-5; Czech Republic, 2-5; Denmark, 2-5; Dominican Republic, 2-5; Ecuador, 2-5; Egypt, 2-5; El Salvador, 2-5; England, 2-5; Estonia, 2-5; Finland, 2-5; France, 2-5; Germany, 2-5; Greece, 2-5; Guatemala, 2-5; Guinea, 2-5; Guyana, 2-5; Honduras, 2-5; Hungary, 2-5; Iceland, 2-5; India, 2-5; Indonesia, 2-5; Israel, 2-5; Italy, 2-5; Jamaica, 2-5; Japan, 2-5; Kazakhstan, 2-5; Kenya, 2-5; Korea, 2-5; Kuwait, 2-5; Kyrgyzstan, 2-5; Laos, 2-5; Latvia, 2-5; Lebanon, 2-5; Lithuania, 2-5; Luxembourg, 2-5; Macedonia, 2-5; Madagascar, 2-5; Malawi, 2-5; Malaysia, 2-5; Maldives, 2-5; Mali, 2-5; Malta, 2-5; Mauritania, 2-5; Mauritius, 2-5; Mexico, 2-5; Moldova, 2-5; Monaco, 2-5; Mongolia, 2-5; Montenegro, 2-5; Morocco, 2-5; Mozambique, 2-5; Myanmar, 2-5; Namibia, 2-5; Nepal, 2-5; Netherlands, 2-5; Netherlands Antilles, 2-5; New Zealand, 2-5; Nicaragua, 2-5; Niger, 2-5; Nigeria, 2-5; Norway, 2-5; Oman, 2-5; Pakistan, 2-5; Panama, 2-5; Paraguay, 2-5; Peru, 2-5; Philippines, 2-5; Poland, 2-5; Portugal, 2-5; Qatar, 2-5; Romania, 2-5; Russia, 2-5; Rwanda, 2-5; Saudi Arabia, 2-5; Senegal, 2-5; Serbia, 2-5; Seychelles, 2-5; Sierra Leone, 2-5; Singapore, 2-5; Slovakia, 2-5; Slovenia, 2-5; South Africa, 2-5; South Korea, 2-5; Spain, 2-5; Sri Lanka, 2-5; St. Kitts and Nevis, 2-5; St. Lucia, 2-5; St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2-5; Sudan, 2-5; Sweden, 2-5; Switzerland, 2-5; Taiwan, 2-5; Tajikistan, 2-5; Tanzania, 2-5; Thailand, 2-5; Timor-Leste, 2-5; Trinidad and Tobago, 2-5; Tunisia, 2-5; Turkey, 2-5; Turkmenistan, 2-5; Uganda, 2-5; Ukraine, 2-5; United Arab Emirates, 2-5; United Kingdom, 2-5; United States, 2-5; Uzbekistan, 2-5; Venezuela, 2-5; Vietnam, 2-5; Wales, 2-5; West Bank, 2-5; Yemen, 2-5; Zambia, 2-5; Zimbabwe, 2-5.

Golf

Henry Picard, who won the Masters in 1958, has died aged 80 after a lengthy illness.

Italian Open (Golf): Early leading scores (after 36 holes): 1. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 2. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 3. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 4. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 5. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 6. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 7. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 8. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 9. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 10. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 11. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 12. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 13. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 14. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 15. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 16. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 17. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 18. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 19. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 20. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 21. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 22. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 23. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 24. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 25. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 26. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 27. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 28. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 29. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 30. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 31. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 32. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 33. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 34. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 35. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 36. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 37. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 38. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 39. J. Picard (ITA) 67; 40. J. 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Challenge Cup final
The past heroes and the possible match-winners, page 28



sport

Wenger's gospel
The Arsenal manager talks to Glenn Moore, page 30

United scent early title celebration

Football
CLIVE WHITE

At just after eight o'clock this evening Manchester United could be celebrating their fourth Premiership title in five seasons. For the championship to be confirmed eight days ahead of schedule, and quite properly, on a Saturday, Alex Ferguson's team must win their morning match against Leicester City at Filbert Street – thereby applying pressure not a little unfairly on Liverpool – with the Merseysiders failing to beat Tottenham Hotspur in their evening game at Anfield.

How ironic that the Football Association should be imploring fans to arrive early on these last two weekends of the season in order to ensure that all matches finish at the same time when a vital discrepancy like this exists purely for the benefit of their Sky paymasters.

Should that particular scenario fail to materialise (and one should have in mind that Liverpool haven't won any of their last three home fixtures against Spurs) United may have only to wait until Monday, against Middlesbrough, to confirm what Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, among a hundred thousand others, resigned himself to long ago.

An 11th championship success would still leave United seven short of Liverpool's record but their monopoly of the title is fast approaching the standards of Liverpool who, during one particularly successful period between 1979-84 won it five times in six seasons. Ferguson, however, is in no rush for title No 11 – "We'll win it if we win on Saturday," he said, "but it doesn't matter when and the most important thing for us

is to make sure we don't get carried away."

At least the loss of Robbie Fowler through suspension until the end of the season could be offset for Liverpool by the absence of Ian Walker in the Tottenham goal. The England keeper is struggling with shoulder and Achilles injuries and Espen Bardson is standing by to make his debut.

Goalkeepers, or rather the absence of them, could have a bearing at the bottom of the division. Middlesbrough, who must beat Aston Villa at the Riverside to have any realistic hope of sustaining their Premiership interest through to Monday, are without their two first-choice keepers, Mark Schwarzer and Gary Walsh, because of injury while their No 3, Ben Roberts, will be carrying an injury into the game. Full-back Neil Cox is standing by.

It will take little short of a broken leg to prevent most players from playing their part in the fight for survival. In the case of Stuart Pearce, the player-manager of Nottingham Forest, it would probably take that and much more besides. Hence he has included himself in the squad for the club's do-or-die encounter with Wimbledon despite missing the last two games with a calf injury as well as the midweek international at Wembley. Anything less than a victory today and they will be reacquainting themselves with the First Division for the second time in four seasons.

With all six of the bottom clubs at home, even if you include the "safe seat" of Leicester, they will have only themselves to blame if they fail. Everton's need of a point to make absolutely sure that manager-elect Bobby Robson will be in charge of a top flight

club next season, could seriously impinge on Sunderland's survival prospects in their last competitive match at Roker Park. Better late than never, Niall Quinn is set to make his first start in seven months.

Coventry City, who, as usual, are going through their Houdini routine, may have to effect today's escape, against Derby County, without Dion Dublin, who has a knee injury. With eight points out of 12 only Southampton, of those down among the dead men, have struck a richer vein of form than the Sky Blues.

Matt Le Tissier has made himself available for today's game against Blackburn Rovers but it will take a brave, or more likely, foolhardy man to rock the boat now – particularly after the way his deputy, Michael Evans, has been performing.

Of those placed immediately above the bottom three, West Ham would appear the most vulnerable in terms of form. As the Hammers' luck would have it Sheffield Wednesday, still in pursuit of an unlikely European dream, visit Upton Park with Andy Booth, David Hirst and Dejan Stankovic restored to fitness. West Ham must hope that Slaven Bilic, set for a summer move, probably to Goodison, still has the Eastenders' fortunes at heart on his return from suspension.

One man who is not going anywhere, apparently, is Les Ferdinand. On the eve of Newcastle's visit to Arsenal, with whom, along with Liverpool, they are contesting the second Champions' League spot, the club allayed any fears about the England striker's future at St James' Park. "There's no problem with Les," Kenny Dalglish, the Newcastle manager, said. "If he was concerned he'd speak to me and he's never said anything."



Somerset's opener Michael Burns is comprehensively bowled by Ireland's Justin Benson at Taunton yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

Mushtaq leaves Ireland bamboozled

Cricketer

HENRY BLOFELD
reports from Taunton
Somerset 349-7; Ireland 128
Somerset win by 221 runs

On Thursday afternoon Mushtaq Ahmed stepped off the plane from Colombo where Pakistan had been playing Sri Lanka and, less than 24 hours later after one preliminary twirl of his arms, mesmerised Ireland with a magnificent display of leg breaks and googlies. In his first two overs he took three important wickets

for 13 runs and finished with 7 for 24 in 9.2 overs.

His first was that of Hansie Cronje, the South African captain. Mushtaq's first ball went down the leg side for four wickets; the second was a googly which hastened on to Cronje, who, on the back foot, was palpably leg-before.

In Mushtaq's second over, Justin Benson, Ireland's captain, scuttled across his stumps and tried to flick the ball to leg. It was another googly which hustled through everything and hit the middle and leg stumps. Two balls later Andy Dunlop

was lured forward by a beautifully flighted leg-break which touched the outside edge of the bat and went gently to slip.

The Irish innings had been carried on nobly by Andrew Patterson, a 21-year-old of great promise. He played a series of superb drives through the off-side and pulled Graham Rose for the only six of the day.

After Mushtaq had taken those three early wickets, Patterson reached his first 50 for Ireland when he pulled the leg-spinner through midwicket for four. But later in the over he drove Mushtaq gently to mid-off

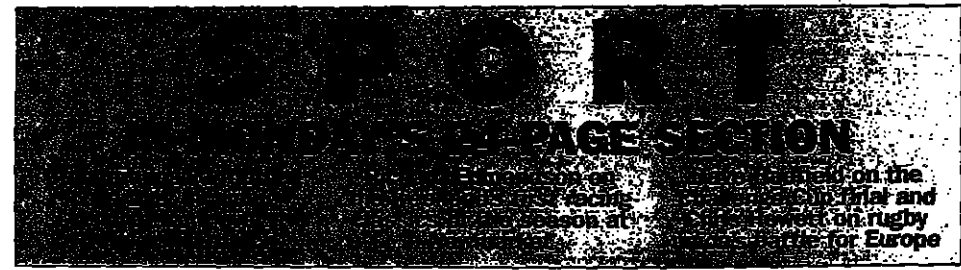
having faced 41 balls and hit nine fours and one six.

After Derek Heasley had been surprised by another googly, Greg Molins bowled muddled his legs and Paul McCrum had misjudged to mid-on, it was all over.

When Somerset won the toss and batted it made it much less likely that Ireland would pull off another victory. They had been handicapped already when their opening bowler, Peter Gillespie, pulled a back muscle before the start. Decker Curry who made 75 against Middlesex on Monday had been left behind in Ireland to work at his abattoir.

Rose and Michael Burns gave Somerset a fine start putting on 87 for the first wicket in 13 overs also with some lovely driving. They were then out in successive overs and Mark Lathwell soon followed before some powerful left-handed strokeplay by Simon Ecclestone, who made 92 from 83 balls, ensured that Somerset did not lose their way. When Peter Bowler and Robert Turner cashed in at the end they were assured of an invincible score.

More reports, Scoreboard, page 29



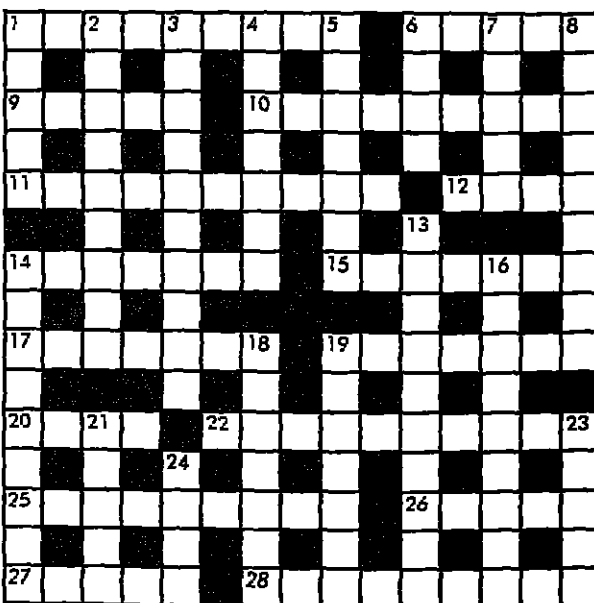
THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3289 Saturday 3 May

By Phil

ACROSS

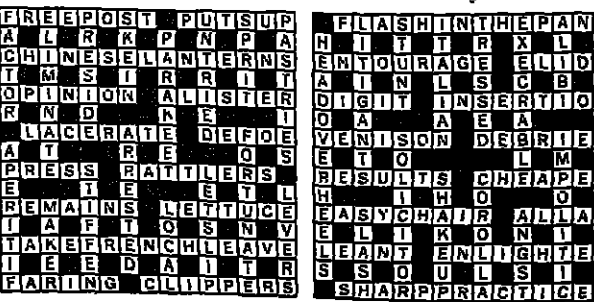
DOWN



- 1 Girl's taking religious book for end of service (9)
- 6 Lot of people initially seen headed (5)
- 9 Fabric bombed when brought back (5)
- 10 More suitable to follow unfashionable tailor? (9)
- 11 Corrupts recalled TV host with glaring threat of trouble to come? (5-5)
- 12 Some fair maid? (4)
- 14 Racecourse isn't leading to endless rush (7)
- 15 Residential areas are involved with UXB, I fancy (7)
- 17 Servant bringing in excessive amount of soup (7)
- 19 Nautical rope I learnt to twist (7)
- 20 Early European tribesman captured Hungary (4)
- 22 Spinster relative, Australian, in untamed frolic (6-4)
- 25 Copying one small child, cutting round at four (9)
- 26 Having a change of heart in obscene song (5)
- 27 Undertook litigation – first of exhibits: shoe leather (5)
- 28 To be in Paris, stifling rage, being a foreigner there (9)
- 1 Work parties for the birds? (5)
- 2 Punct about a Parisian Baron in a hat (3-6)
- 3 Unhappily I'm mean – I'm clutching gold for remembrance's sake (2, 8)
- 4 Plant is also found on place in golf-course? (7)
- 5 Vegetable cutter prepared with energy (7)
- 6 Cuts back for a quick trip (4)
- 7 One sailor embracing student in part of church (5)
- 8 Preserve a type of cat (9)
- 13 Chasing University type in Cambridgeshire (10)
- 14 Sections of music scale – exercises doubly good in endless operatic song (9)
- 16 One helps to start fires – bit queer (unstable) about that, primarily (9)
- 18 Hoard money up? I have, being really (7)
- 19 More embarrassed, capturing last of tame wild animals? (3, 4)
- 21 Tense and ready for a load of rubbish (5)
- 23 Herb for you and me (5)
- 24 Identical missile used on English (4)

Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hardbacked copies of the new Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: D Pemberton, Castle Cary; S Carratt, Perth; C Steeden, St. Anne's; M Stokes, Bristol; J Lowe, Manchester.

Borg's son loses his first match

Tennis

Robin Borg followed in the footsteps of his famous father and lost his first competitive tennis match. The younger Borg played Niklas Persson, one of the favourites in the under-13 division of the KLTK Cup in Stockholm, and lost 6-1, 6-1.

Some consolation for Robin, 11, was that he won more games than his father did when he played his first competitive match. "I lost my first match 6-0, 6-0," recalled Bjorn Borg, who went on to win five straight Wimbledon titles and six French Open crowns.

Borg Jr played other sports when growing up and only started playing tennis a few years ago. He plays for the Royal Tennis Club and has been coached for 18 months by Jan Zabrodsky, one of Sweden's top players in the early 1980s. The junior tournament was held in the club's facility, the Royal Tennis Hall, where Bjorn Borg beat John McEnroe in the 1980 Stockholm Open final and led Sweden to its first Davis Cup triumph in 1975.

Wattana's mind game

Snooker

GUY HODGSON
reports from the Crucible, Sheffield

Give James Wattana his full title and your tongue bleeds a rest. His non-Anglicised name is Wattana Pu Oh Orrm for a start, while it goes on (deep breath) to include Commander third class of the Most Noble Order of the Crown of Thailand. It is a mouthful which makes Stephen Hendry MBE seem positively puny.

Achievements speak louder than words, no matter how many and how grand, however, and those of the six-times winner of the Embassy World Championship shout louder than anyone else's. Yet whether Hendry will make it to a seventh title is in doubt as he and Wattana are evenly poised in their semi-final.

Yesterday, Hendry frequently threatened to turn his overnight 5-3 lead into an insuperable margin, but the day's play finished at 8-8.

The reigning champion will be kicking himself, for he is desperate for a seventh crown that would push him beyond Steve Davis and Ray Reardon as winner of the most modern day world titles. Wattana, on the other hand, craves to escape from the list of nearly men.

The world amateur champion in 1988, the 27-year-old Wattana, who plays in the West under an identity which makes pronunciation easier for Europeans, has just three ranking tournaments to his name.

"There's not much difference in ability," Wattana said, comparing himself with Hendry. "It's in the mind. That's why Stephen has been No 1 for so long. My mind is getting better."

Not by so much, though, that you would notice. During his quarter-final against John Parrott, Wattana tried some outrageous shots that had the watching Hendry shaking his head at the bravery and foolhardiness. If the audacious shots work, fine. If they do not, players with merciless precision pick him off.

Wait long enough with Wattana, who admits to having a

problem with his concentration, and a mistake usually happens, which summed up the first two frames yesterday.

The Thai, whose nickname ought to be "Rash" rather than "Typhoon", made the initial break only to be buried by Hendry. The word landslide was in vogue yesterday and Wattana understood its meaning better than most.

Those two frames gave Hendry a 7-3 lead, which, with a winning target of 17, had the organisers fearing that tonight's session would be superfluous. But with Wattana on the ropes, Hendry lost his punch.

Shot after shot was squandered and, suddenly, Wattana had the mental equivalent of a cold sponge on his face. Four out of five frames went to the Thai before the last frame fell into his lap via a fluke. Ahead 54-42, he aimed a yellow into the bottom corner only to see it vibrate in the jaws before rolling along the cushion into another pocket.

"I've had bad luck for two years and I've not said anything," he said after beating Parrott. "You have to accept the run of the balls." Today he will happily accept anything fate throws his way.

Latest positions, Digest, page 31

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